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*FIVE*  
*NORTH CAROLINA*  
*NEGRO*  
*EDUCATORS*

*Published under the auspices of*

THE DIVISION OF COOPERATION  
IN EDUCATION AND RACE RELATIONS

*Cooperating Organizations*

*State Department of Public Instruction*

*University of North Carolina*

*Duke University*

FIVE  
NORTH CAROLINA  
NEGRO  
EDUCATORS

*Prepared under the Direction of*

N. C. NEWBOLD

Chapel Hill

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA PRESS

1939



## *Preface*

It is significant of the new educational approach to have available for general use, in schools, colleges, and the libraries, school primers and biographies whose subjects are Negroes. Negro children in school, in the library, at the moving picture, and over the radio see, read, hear, and learn about white people. The picture in the school primer is always a picture of a white child. History, industry, business, education, and religion in the Negro community have long been mainly the white man's history, industry, business, education, and religion, most often of and by white people for Negroes. In the midst of it all, Negroes have received and assimilated the white man's civilization with characteristic good humor and fine appreciation, and have made distinctive contributions of their own. It is good time that we have school books with pictures, chores, games, and the manner of life of Negro children. White children will read them with appreciative interest and understanding as expressing much of a common childhood which after all is basic to a sense of a common humanity.

In timely response to such needs and sentiments, the University of North Carolina Press has published *Tobe*, the simple and vivid story of a Negro boy, and in the present volume publishes the biographies of five North Carolina Negro educators who are examples of the noble part Negroes are playing in the life, spirit, and up-building of our State.

FRANK P. GRAHAM, *President*  
*University of North Carolina*



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## *Introduction*

In the original plans for the Division of Cooperation in Education and Race Relations eight years ago (or in 1931) was included a proposal to produce a book that would comprise life sketches of five outstanding Negro educational leaders of North Carolina. When the Division began its work in 1935, this was one of the first projects undertaken. Committees were organized in nine colleges, each including a faculty member and one or more students. For many months these student committees collected material from all possible sources, and, under the direction of their faculty advisers, outlined and wrote the sketches wholly or in part. At the beginning of each sketch will be found a list of faculty advisers and students who prepared that particular sketch. It will be noted that eleven faculty advisers and thirty-eight students worked together on these sketches. Of these, seven faculty advisers and twenty students were Negroes representing five Negro colleges. Four faculty advisers and eighteen students were from four colleges for white students.

The major aims of this effort, as are evidently apparent, are: to preserve in permanent form the inspiring record of the lives and activities of the five persons included; to provide an opportunity for a most helpful cooperative effort by groups of white and Negro college students and faculty members; to make available some useful, encouraging, and highly informing material for

use as supplementary readers in the upper grammar grades and in the high school classes in the public schools of the state. Before publication the sketches received careful and sympathetic editing at the hands of Mr. Phillips Russell of the University of North Carolina and Dean Foster P. Payne of Shaw University.

N. C. NEWBOLD, *Director*  
*Division of Cooperation in Education*  
*and Race Relations*  
*State Department of Public Instruction*  
*University of North Carolina*  
*Duke University*

Simon Green Atkins

*and the*

*Winston-Salem Teachers'*  
*College*

COMMITTEE TO PREPARE A BRIEF SKETCH OF  
THE LIFE OF  
SIMON GREEN ATKINS

Winston-Salem Teachers' College

MR. W. F. BUTLER, FACULTY ADVISER

MISS GERTRUDE A. ALEX-	MISS ANNIE MAE HOUSTON
ANDER	MISS MARIE R. INGRAM
MISS JUANITA E. PHILLIPS	

W

HEN SIMON GREEN ATKINS

went to Winston-Salem as a school teacher in 1890, the twin town (not then joined) was just beginning to rise as an industrial centre, and in nearly every respect it showed it. The colored people who had flocked in, looking for work first and then a place to sleep, found themselves on the wrong side of the railroad tracks. Their homes were little better than one- and two-room shacks. There was scarcely such a thing as a Negro home with as much as two stories. Moreover, there was scarcely a house on this side of town that had a room which was not either a kitchen or a bedroom.

To Atkins, sensitive, emotional, and fresh from a post in an organized institution with a well-ordered life, the scene must have been disheartening. However, with his high nervous energy and zeal for improvement, he went to work, using whatever material was available, believing with Napoleon that "a good general wins battles with whatever troops he can muster."

Within a comparatively few years Atkins had transformed a barren hillside, marked by nothing more than a powder house and a couple of gullies, into a progressive



community stamped with painted houses, blossoming gardens, and neat streets, the whole crowned by the campus and strong buildings of the Winston-Salem Teachers' College.

All his life he aimed to be a good teacher; he believed teaching to be the grandest and most satisfying of all professions. Yet fate made him more than a teacher. It made him a community creator and the builder of a decent home life for his people. He was an ardent advocate of individual character and individual growth, but the history of the town where he labored so long has recorded him as one of the greatest of its social agents.

## I

SIMON GREEN ATKINS was the son of Allen and Eliza Atkins. He was born June 11, 1863, in Haywood, Chatham County, North Carolina. His parents were farmers, and much of his early boyhood was spent in performing tasks on and about the farm. Here his daily work developed a physical hardihood which stood well the strain of nearly fifty years, for he never spared himself. The atmosphere in which his childhood was spent was wholesome, developing in him a self-respect that led to simple, clean living. Other factors in his home life played an important part in determining his later career.



*Simon Green Atkins*



For example, he often spoke of the kindly interest taken in him by his family's employer, Captain E. Bryan.

His early schooling was acquired at Haywood, where he came under the influence of Mrs. Annie Cooper and other pioneers in the field of education, who, in addition to rendering educational service at St. Augustine's Institute, went into remote communities to give the rural people the benefits of instruction. Eager to learn, and with a retentive mind, he soon stood first among his schoolmates. Although North Carolina schools were then poorly equipped, Atkins received enough training to prepare him for a position as teacher of the village school, but he soon realized the need of more advanced education.

In 1880 he entered the academic department of St. Augustine's Normal Collegiate Institute at Raleigh. Here he was influenced by teachers who stressed actual attainment and intellectual growth rather than degrees and titles. The days spent at this institution were filled with opportunities for moral, spiritual, and intellectual training. The value of this early training and its influence on his later life is seen in his educational philosophy as expressed in a report to his trustees:

"It is impossible to have an effective public school system without providing for the training of teachers. The blind cannot lead the blind. Mere literary attainments are not sufficient to make the possessor a competent instructor. There must be added the ability to influence the young and to communicate knowledge. There must be a mastery of the best modes of conducting schools, of bringing out the possibilities, intellectual and moral, of the pupils' nature.

"In some rare cases these qualities are inborn, but

generally it is an immense advantage to the teacher to be trained by those who have studied and mastered the methods which have been found by experience to be the most successful in dispelling ignorance and inculcating knowledge. The schools in which this training is given, called normal colleges or normal schools, have been found most efficient agencies in raising up a body of teachers who infuse new life and vigor into the public schools. There is urgent need for one at least in North Carolina. A school of similar character should be established for the education of colored teachers, the want of which is more deeply felt by the black race even than by the white. In addition to the fact that it is our plain duty to make no discrimination in the matter of public education, I cannot too strongly urge upon you the importance of the consideration that whatever of education we may be able to give the children of the state should be imparted under our own auspices with a thorough North Carolina spirit."

## II

IN THE COURSE of the summer following his graduation from St. Augustine's, Atkins took a position in his home county, where he was soon recognized as an exceptional teacher, so much so that he attracted the attention of Dr. J. C. Price, president of Livingstone College, Salisbury, North Carolina, who, in the fall of 1884, offered

him a position as head of the grammar school department of that institution. Of this appointment, the *Quarter-Centennial of Livingstone College* said, "Schools, like other institutions, as they develop need reinforcement. So the trustees found a very happy selection in the person of Professor Simon G. Atkins, whose keen and cultured intellect, whose consecration and high ideals, and adaptability to teach both by precept and example eminently qualified him to become a member of the teaching force."

He remained at Livingstone College six years, working continually. Even his summers were spent in conducting institutes for colored teachers in many of the counties of North Carolina. At the same time his other abilities brought him recognition so that for the last two of his six years in Livingstone College he served as treasurer of the institution.

He soon attracted the attention of the school board members in Winston-Salem. They invited him in 1890 to accept the position of principal of the public school for Negroes, which was then the largest and most important public school for Negroes in the state. Livingstone College showed its regard for the young man in the following resolution from the faculty:

"Prof. S. G. Atkins, who has been a teacher in Livingstone College for six years, having decided to enter another field of labor, goes with our regrets at his departure from our midst and with our interest in his well being and success. Words are inadequate to express a testimonial confidence we desire to give in token of our high appreciation of his gentlemanly and Christian bearing, his scholarly attainments, and invaluable service as an earnest, enthusiastic and eminently successful teacher.

May God's blessings continue to attend him and all his work in the future, and may he ever meet with that success and encouragement of which he is so richly deserving."

### III

PROFESSOR ATKINS soon realized that the success of his educational program depended upon better housing conditions and ownership of homes. He therefore began the agitation which brought blessings upon the whole community. In all this he had the wholehearted support, confidence, and co-operation of the progressive white people of the town.

At his suggestion a project was started to develop that neglected section of town known as Columbian Heights, and this section was opened up for colored people. In 1892 Dr. Atkins moved his family to the new settlement. Many other Negro families followed. There were finally enough Negroes in the community to justify the establishment of a school, incorporated in 1892.

It was largely through the co-operation of leading white citizens that this project developed. Among them was H. E. Fries, for years chairman of the board of trustees of Teachers' College. Being of a retiring nature, Mr. Fries always worked unobtrusively but effectively. In many instances it was his suggestions that helped Dr. Atkins to solve difficult business problems.

Another of the white citizens who stood by Dr. Atkins was W. A. Blair. When the Teachers' College was in need of land during its period of expansion, Mr. Blair gave to the state valuable land for this purpose. Mr. Blair was the original treasurer of the board of trustees of the college, and his care for its funds was in no small measure responsible for its growth.

Another adviser was A. H. Eller, first secretary of the board of trustees. During the entire life of the institution Mr. Eller contributed time and money as well as personal influence to its development.

In the meantime Dr. Atkins continued his work at Depot Street School. In 1893 the board of education added to this school an assembly hall, a library, and an office. This construction began in the middle of the panic year.

The little school at Columbian Heights which was begun in 1892-93 was enlarged the following year. As it grew, the demands upon Dr. Atkins' leadership became greater. In 1895 he resigned his position in the public school in order to devote his time to what was then called the Slater Normal and Industrial School, which had just passed under state supervision. Two years later the school received its first legislative charter. In speaking of Dr. Atkins' work and leadership there, Dr. H. E. Rondthaler made this summary:

"It required vision, faith and energy to develop this institution. It was founded upon a gulley-washed hillside, where there are now paved streets and garden-surrounded houses, and where the Winston-Salem Teachers College, once Slater Normal School, dominates and dignifies the rising ground. No house had stood for many years on this neglected suburban section



except a small windowless birch cubicle called the powder house located in this useless and isolated spot, because its very isolation and lack of value meant added safety to its dangerous gunpowder content.

"That man is indeed a seer who can project a thriving college upon so lonesome an area. This will always be the real monument to Professor Atkins, and none could be more vital nor any more wholly characteristic."

From the beginning the affairs of the school were supervised by a local board. A field man was employed and the school grew in number of students, in equipment, in resources, and in favor with the people. In 1895 the state legislature appropriated one thousand dollars for the new institution on condition that friends of the school would raise a like amount.

The required sum of money was raised and a new building was added to the campus. Bricks for the new building were made by the students and completed with materials purchased largely on the personal responsibility of Dr. Atkins. Having put his hand to the plough, he would not look back. When confronted by difficulties he worked all the harder, and when seemingly unsurmountable obstacles blocked his way he prayed and went forward. His life in the community was such that he was always able to obtain a sympathetic hearing from the leading lawyers, bankers, and businessmen of the city. When the school received from the state thirty thousand dollars for additions and improvements, equipment was bought for the new administration and recitation halls, and a new period of growth began. About this time the board of trustees took an option on the proposed construction of a street back of the boys' dormitory. During the same period the property of the

Colored Episcopal Mission was bought so as to complete the campus square. Money for the purpose was obtained from the general maintenance fund of the school. The school plant at this time consisted of seven buildings, valued at about thirty thousand dollars.

President Atkins and the trustees were determined to keep up with the demands made on the school, and, with the co-operation of citizens of Winston-Salem and students of the school, a large farm was purchased and equipped. At this time the need of a hospital, and domestic science and nurse-training departments was deeply felt. One of the citizens offered to contribute five thousand dollars to this cause if the trustees of the school could secure another five thousand dollars.

Plans for enlarging the work of the school received the support of some of the most prominent men in the country, and many felt that the institution was really helping to solve the race problem of the community. The following extract from an appeal printed in the *Winston-Salem Journal*, February 16, 1917, shows the esteem in which Dr. Atkins and the school were held in the community and the state:

"If there is an institution in North Carolina that deserves to grow, Slater is such an institution. Under the directing hands of Professor Atkins, this school has rendered this community and section a service the value of which cannot be estimated in dollars and cents. In his talk before the appropriation committee Wednesday, State Superintendent Joyner referred to Professor Atkins as one of the great educators of the south. We know that the principal of Slater is continuing his work in this city at a great financial sacrifice to himself in order that he may, if possible, live to see the institution

which he founded achieve the high destiny which should be in store for it. Slater has been growing rapidly in recent years and has already reached a position of unique importance among the educational institutions of the colored in this state. It deserves the unstinted support of our people in this hour of its need—in this hour when its whole future so largely depends on the action of the General Assembly. We do not believe that the Legislature can spend a few thousand dollars more wisely than in helping Professor Atkins prepare Slater for yet larger service for the colored youth of North Carolina. Certainly the record Slater has made in turning out good, law-abiding industrious citizens justifies the people of this city, and especially the far-seeing and influential white people, in making some effective effort to get a larger appropriation from the State for permanent improvement and equipment of this school.”

Dr. Atkins was instrumental in obtaining numerous gifts for the institution. The General Education Board and the Rosenwald Fund made grants to be used for dormitory, school-room, and library equipment, and for a health center for the school.

The school during this period represented a part of the state's program for the training of Negro teachers. It became the third state normal school for the Negro race when the state of North Carolina acquired the property in 1905 and took full control. Up to this time all Negro normal schools had been essentially high schools, with teacher-training courses included in the curriculum. The purpose of the State Board of Education was to advance the work of these institutions as fast as possible and reorganize them as standard two-year normal schools, doing work wholly above the high

school level. It was during the earlier part of the twentieth century that this institution was able to set up regular normal courses above high school, and the first class to complete the required courses was graduated in 1920.

## IV

AT A SESSION of the General Assembly of 1925 a new charter was given to the institution under the name of the Winston-Salem Teachers' College. It also received enlarged powers, extending its courses above high school to four years of regular college work, limited to the special function of training teachers, supervisors, and principals for the Negro elementary schools of the state.

After 1925 the success of the work of Dr. Atkins may be seen in his annual reports to the board of trustees. The report of 1926 is particularly interesting because it gives one some idea of the rapid yet solid growth of the institution. Extracts follow:

"The growth of our institution represents a part of the State's program for the training of Negro teachers. Our institution became the third State Normal School for the Negro race when the State acquired the property in 1905 and took full control of the same.

"All the Negro normal schools up to that time and for some years afterward were essentially high schools with some teacher training courses included in the curriculum.

It was, however, the purpose of the State Board of Education to advance the work of these institutions as fast as possible and re-organize them as standard two-year normal schools, doing work wholly above the high school level.

"It was only a little more than six years ago that this institution was able to set up regular normal courses above high school, and our first class completing those courses was graduated at the commencement of 1920 . . .

"We are now approaching the end of the first year of our history as a college, or our first college anniversary. This has, therefore, been a sort of testing year for us. It, I am sure, will be of interest to the board to learn that our enrollment this year in our college classes has reached a total of 151, which gives us, the youngest Negro college in the State, the third place in that respect among the Negro colleges of the State with only Shaw University, Raleigh, and Johnson C. Smith University, Charlotte—the two oldest Negro colleges in the State—going ahead of us. Last year we had an advance College enrollment of less than seventy-five students before May 1st. This year at the same date we had an advance enrollment of at least 100, and by the same token our college enrollment this year should reach at least 200, with the chance of taking the lead in enrollment among the Negro colleges of the State. Besides the 151 college students, we have living in our dormitories 121 high school pupils in the 10th and 11th grades, which means that our faculty is teaching directly 272 pupils. We are touching more or less indirectly a large additional number . . .

"This does not include about 500 high school pupils in the city colored high school situated practically on

our grounds who are influenced in a very definite way by our college organization, not to speak of 500 others in the elementary public school near by who are also touched directly or indirectly by us, especially in our use of this elementary school as a practice and observation school for our student teachers . . .

"It is of paramount importance that we as far as possible prepare to train completely our own teachers and leaders, and that we offer right here in our State to the young Negro candidate for teaching and leadership facilities as good as are offered elsewhere, especially as our own educational standards and requirements demand an equipment which can be produced only by such facilities.

"Furthermore in our work of expansion we must think more of the needs of the Negro teachers that are now in service. This is also both a race and State need. We are meeting this need somewhat as I have already indicated in our Summer school."

From this report it is easy for us to understand what C. H. Mebane, former state superintendent of public instruction of North Carolina, meant when in 1917 he said, "If I had fifty such men as Professor Atkins in North Carolina, I could make a complete revolution in educational work in a short time."

The growth of the college since its reorganization on the four-year level may be noted by reference to the following statistics:

ENROLLMENT	CAPITAL ASSETS
1925-26 . . . . . 151	\$370,450
1926-27 . . . . . 179	569,993
1927-28 . . . . . 181	632,875

ENROLLMENT	CAPITAL ASSETS
1928-29.....281	633,993
1929-30.....318	635,272
1930-31.....322	635,272
1931-32.....282	635,072
1932-33.....267	633,772
1933-34.....271	633,772
1934-35.....357	635,052
1935-36.....477	634,612
1936-37.....518	672,434

## v

DR. ATKINS was active in religious as well as educational affairs. No history of the A. M. E. Zion Church would be complete without a statement of his work as a layman who served it zealously for nearly half a century. For twenty years he acted as secretary of education, being in a sense lent to the church for a part of this period by the state to supervise the educational work of the denomination. He was one of the few churchmen of the Methodist persuasion, either clerical or lay, who attended three successive ecumenical conferences, that is, the world conferences of the Methodist people held every ten years. Dr. Atkins represented the church in the following three ecumenical conferences: 1901, London; 1911, Toronto; 1921, London.

But even in his religious work Dr. Atkins never failed to remind those with whom he labored of the value of education, both practical and religious. The following excerpts taken from his speech at the 1901 ecumenical conference fully express his point of view:

"We want to educate the people for service rather than for success. We are not opposed to industrial education; we believe in it. We believe that the Negro's industrial opportunity in that country [the United States] is very great, and he ought to be prepared for it. But the tendency in the advocacy of purely industrial education for the Negro is to carry him into materialism, is to take him away from his own evangelical foundations, is to carry him to the field of mere success rather than into the field of service . . .

"We believe that whatever education is given him ought to comprehend his heart training, his intellectual training, and prepare him to be a brother among the people, stimulate him in interest in Christian and religious work and in missionary work, even to go to work in Africa—to go anywhere that the interests of his people call him; and when he gets there to be prepared to do the work laid upon him. We want more industrial education rather than less of it, but it is leading millions of people in that country into the danger of magnifying success rather than of magnifying service. I appeal to the people in this Ecumenical Conference, to the Methodists in the United States, and to the friends of suffering and struggling humanity everywhere, to antagonize the idea that the Negro is to be prepared only for a field hand. Let him be made a man, and everything else will take care of itself."



## VI

THE INFLUENCE of Dr. Atkins was felt not only in religious and educational circles but also in journalism and other activities. I. Garland Penn, editor of the *Afro-American Press*, in commenting on Negro editors who had contributed to the improvement of the Negro's position in America during the latter part of the nineteenth century, made the following statement concerning Dr. Atkins:

"As we conclude this chapter we are greeted by the finest and fairest publication yet, *The Southland*, a monthly magazine, founded by the Rev. J. C. Price, D.D., of Livingstone College, Salisbury, N. C., and edited by Professor S. G. Atkins of that school. It is truly the forum of the *Afro-American Press*. Words too commendable of *The Southland* cannot be said. The high mission it comes to fulfill must indeed be carried out to the letter; and in order to do this it demands the support of the race. There is no more worthy magazine than this. The first number was issued in February, 1890, and received great encomiums from the press generally.

"The founder, as well as the editor, needs no introduction at our hands: one, the leading educator of our race; the other, a writer of supreme excellence."

Although Dr. Atkins was humble and unassuming, he

received many honors, none of which was solicited. When the state of North Carolina sent an exhibit to the Sesquicentennial in Philadelphia in 1926, it included an exhibit of the work of Negro education in the state. In the preparation of this part of the exhibit, the State Department of Public Instruction requested the leading colored people of North Carolina to name the seven persons of their race who had done most for Negro education in the twenty-five years preceding that time. The name of Professor Atkins headed the list. In 1926 Howard University conferred on him the degree of Doctor of Laws.

Dr. Atkins was one of the founders of the North Carolina Negro Teachers' Association, organized about 1881. He served several terms as president and as secretary. His last term as president was in 1927. The eloquent speech he delivered before the organization that convened in Goldsboro, North Carolina, November 23, 1927, is of especial interest to all who were connected with the creation of the North Carolina Negro Teachers' Association and its development and growth up to 1927. Extracts follow:

"I remember well the meeting when the organization was formed. This meeting was held in the hall of the House of Representatives in Raleigh in the year, I believe, 1881. Most of the men and women who formed the organization have crossed the bar, teachers, ministers, and friends of education.

"We met the first few years in Raleigh; we then met a few years at Kittrell College, then known as Kittrell School. As I think of those years and of Kittrell I think especially of R. H. W. Leak, Bennett Goins, and John R. Hawkins. Our first meeting place when we left

Kittrell and began to rotate among the institutions was at Shaw University . . .

"There were two outstanding things in the history of the association which I think are worthy to be mentioned and remembered. The association at one time issued a publication as its organ, which was known as 'The Progressive Educator' and which competent judges have said should be regarded as one of the North Carolina Negro's best journalistic ventures, if not the best. The other outstanding venture of the association was the employment of an all-time field agent to promote Negro education in the State and to voice the attitude of the Negro people of the State in matters educational.

"Many of us recall the fine representative work of Professor C. H. Moore as our field representative through a series of years, and we should not forget that for several years the expenses of this representation were borne by our association and its coöperating friends.

"Passing now at a bound over many matters of interest in the history of the organization, I come to what may be termed the new era of the association which began in 1922. The association had gone through a number of years of ups and downs, with more downs than ups. We had been meeting always in the month of June. Some of the members thought a change in the time of meeting, especially to some holiday after the vacation was over and when the teachers might have had opportunity to recoup themselves financially, would be worth a trial. Because of the June tradition the suggestion for a change in the time had little prospect of being adopted.

"In June, 1921, representatives of the Slater Normal School, Winston-Salem, bantered the committee on time and place of meeting with the proposal that the associa-

tion would be entertained during the Thanksgiving holidays of the next year, 1922, free of charge if the offer should be accepted.

"The committee . . . agreed to the proposal and submitted a recommendation accordingly.

"The proposal was accepted by the association and the response represented a jump in membership from a hundred or two in 1921 to about twelve hundred in 1922, with a bona fide attendance on the grounds at the meeting of about 1,000, well nigh filling the large auditorium of the Slater Normal School and requiring three servings at meals, with some 300 being seated in the dining room at each service during the two full days of the session . . .

"Following our big meeting in 1922 I had a very heavy and exacting year, which was the culmination of several years of arduous effort to lay the foundation for a standard Negro teachers' college in North Carolina. The result, as some of you will recall, was a physical collapse in the spring of 1923, which took me away from home for a period of more than a year, most of the time in a strange distant land.

"Therefore, when the association met in Raleigh during Thanksgiving week, 1923, I was an exile 1,200 miles from the annual meeting of my much loved State Teachers' Association. Being in the midst of a period of enforced rest, I had much time to reflect, and November, 1923, became in a sense a sad month for me. The friends in the great institution where I was resting and fighting to come back were lovely, and there were wonderful preparations made for the observance of Thanksgiving Day. Nevertheless, my heart was heavy. Those Canadian skies were overcast with snow clouds and the

thermometer hovered around and below zero; but the sky was brightened and the atmosphere made warm by the telegram which was brought to my room that Thanksgiving afternoon—a long expensive day letter—bearing your greetings and the signature of the treasurer of this Association, my esteemed friend, Dr. McCrorey. My professional associates in my dear home State had remembered their afflicted, exiled comrade in that distant land. You will excuse the confession, but in my bed with tear-dimmed eyes I nursed that telegram most of the afternoon, and I received from it inestimable comfort and a great boost toward improvement in my physical condition and in my effort to come back . . .

“We remember also tonight that our association’s history and the story of educational progress among our people in the State largely reflects the North Carolina spirit with regard to the Negro population of the commonwealth. It is a North Carolina tradition extending through many decades that human life and human rights are things that are sacred and inviolable in this State, even though that life and those rights belong to Negroes. We cannot remember when this was not so, and, therefore, we love our dear old State because it has never closed the door of hope. Necessarily the period of reconstruction was attended with much bitterness, and it was hard to make adjustments and to reconstruct, but there was in the hearts of our people the basis for a renaissance which should eventually usher in a brighter and better day. There were fine spirits, both white and black, ready to promote the new order and to make it a blessing to all the people. Events for a time moved slowly, but the trend was in the right direction, and gradually great captains emerged to take charge of the

storm-tossed ship of State and to steady and guide her toward a safe and peaceful haven.

"At this point it will be fitting for me to observe that while the people of our State were journeying through the wilderness of the reconstruction period, and while developments were under way for the new order, the Negro people would have been in a sorry plight but for the memorable work of the churches and the missionary societies of the North. The splendid institutions founded and maintained by missionary endeavor—Shaw University at Raleigh, Scotia Seminary at Concord, Bennett College at Greensboro—and, later, the church institutions of the Negro race—Livingstone College at Salisbury, and Kittrell Institute at Kittrell—not to mention scores of smaller schools of the parochial type; these were teaching and training centers that started our people on their way to the promised land.

"Let us in this review not forget those noble missionary educators who were sent to organize and man these fine institutions founded by Northern missionary benevolence—Tupper at Shaw, Mattoon at Biddle, Smith and Smedes at St. Augustine's, Steel at Bennett, and Dorland at Scotia . . .

"The great figures that tower up as we envision the old North State's course through a period of 40 years are Vance and Jarvis, Aycock and Bickett. There have been guarding the educational interests along the way also great lieutenants as State superintendents of public instruction. The names of some of these occur to us at once, especially the names Joyner and Brooks and Allen.

"And as we contemplate the flowering out of this era of educational hope and opportunity for the Negro people of North Carolina, there looms large the personal-

ity and the figure of a fine man who has been content to be our leader and our true friend, who has won our unlimited confidence and gripped our grateful hearts; who in my judgment is the most unique figure in the field of North Carolina education today. I refer to Mr. N. C. Newbold, director of the Division of Negro Education, and the apostle of true understanding and co-operation among all the people of this State.

"And now I think of Bickett and the Bickett regime and of Governor Bickett's big mind and bigger heart. As I recall the warmth of the man's human interest and his resolution 'to do justly and to love mercy,' I am ready to uncover my head and stand in silence as I contemplate his memory and the benediction of his life. He was in unparalleled measure the embodiment of the great humane just heart of our old State. He dedicated himself not merely to the restoration of an era of peace and racial coöperation in this State, but he had a consuming desire to establish such an era, to make peace and friendship, good-will and understanding, among our people a permanent thing, so that never again should the selfish fomenter of strife be able to make any headway in this great, good old State . . .

"I think of H. C. Crosby, J. C. Price, D. J. Saunders, Geo. F. Smith, Moses A. Hopkins, Robert Harris, W. R. Harris, Miss Carrie Coleman, and A. B. Vincent—race-loving teachers, educators, and ministers of the gospel; of John C. Dancy, Stewart Ellison, George H. White, Dr. A. M. Moore, and Col. James H. Young, business men and public-spirited race leaders—all of whom, with others, helped to lay the foundations on which the present superstructure is being built.

"And of the other group—our white friends, we should

never be deaf to the challenge of the great Aycock's voice who spoke to his white compeers in those remarkable words:

“‘We hold our title to power by the tenure of service to God, and if we fail to administer equal and exact justice to the Negro, we shall in the fullness of time lose power ourselves, for we must know that the God who is Love trusts no people with authority for the purpose of enabling them to do injustice to the weak.’”

## VII

DR. ATKINS was ever mindful of the struggles and sacrifices of those educational pioneers who preceded him. This attitude is shown in his memorable presidential speech delivered at State College, Orangeburg, South Carolina, in 1927 before the National Association of Teachers in Colored Schools. It follows in part:

“For some time I have noted an apparent indifference about or forgetfulness of the service of those pioneer educational workers who at the close of the Civil War came on the field in the South even before the smoke of battle had cleared away; a tendency to forget those northern men and women who came South with a marvelous self-denial and with a noteworthy spirit of consecration, and often with a demonstration of courage that was truly heroic. . . . I desire to give a brief appreciation of these benefactors of a race, who, as such, were



notable patriots and friends of humanity. These were the men and women, most of them representative of the great missionary societies, that made the present days possible, these days of Negro leadership and Negro self-reliant endeavor, these days which we now enjoy . . .

"Among those on that roll are the names of: General Howard and Dr. Patton of Howard University, General Armstrong and Dr. Frissell of Hampton Institute, Dr. Cravath of Fisk University, Dr. Tupper of Shaw University, Misses Packard and Giles of Spelman Seminary, President Ware and Dr. Brunstead of Atlanta University, Dr. Braden of Walden University, Dr. Hubbard of Meharry Medical College, Dr. J. Brinton Smith and Dr. J. E. G. Smedes of St. Augustine's School, Rev. Alexander and Dr. Mattoon of Biddle University, Dr. Dorland and Dr. Satterfield of Scotia Seminary, President King and Dr. Hovey of Wayland Seminary and Virginia Union University, and our valued friend, Dr. Dunton of Claflin University, who is still with us in the full measure of his power. These and a host of others, including the great secretaries of the missionary societies, for instance, Dr. Beard of A.M.A., Dr. Morehouse of the Baptist Home Mission Society, Dr. Cowan of the Presbyterian Church, and Dr. Rust of the Freedman's Aid Society . . .

"Oberlin College must be remembered as the friend of the black man as the issue of emancipation came apace and during the period of reconstruction. Lincoln University and Wilberforce University have a logical and grateful place in these reflections as notable and influential agencies in this transition period.

"It is also an interesting fact that Joseph C. Price, the greatest Negro apostle of higher education, and Booker

T. Washington, the greatest Negro apostle of industrialism, who were in a sense the immediate disciples of those who represented the two great currents of educational opinion in the eighties, who were themselves good friends and co-laborers, were likewise benefactors of their race as well as patriots and friends of humanity.

"We should not forget those noble Southern white men and women without whose assistance and encouragement it would have been well nigh impossible for these men and women from the North to have remained in this field. Men of the Haygood and Curry and Dillard type, who had broad minds and warm hearts, who had the standing that made their friendly voices powerful for every good work undertaken in our Southland, and who were big enough and Christian statesmen enough to enter into diplomatic relations with these ambassadors from the court of brotherly love,—these ambassadors whose credentials read as if they had been dictated and signed by the martyr president himself."

## VIII

DR. ATKINS' unceasing toil proved to be too great a strain on his health. In the spring of 1934 an illness became acute, and he felt compelled to give his resignation to the board of trustees. Tributes of esteem and honor were paid to Dr. Atkins during the commencement exercises

of this year upon the announcement of his resignation by H. E. Fries, chairman of the board of trustees.

Knowing that Dr. Atkins would not be able to attend the commencement exercises, J. C. Whitaker, superintendent of the employment department of the R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company and a member of the board of trustees, had installed a public address system that extended from the stage of the auditorium, where the exercises were being held, to the bedside of Dr. Atkins.

The attitude of the people of the community of Winston-Salem can probably best be gleaned from an editorial in the *Winston-Salem Journal* of June 2, 1934. It said in part:

"While the work of Dr. Atkins, the outstanding Negro educator of North Carolina, has long been recognized as distinctive it can be appreciated best when viewed in the light of the conditions which handicapped his efforts in the early years—conditions which yielded to his wisdom, his persistence, and his untiring efforts.

"In the days when he first began his labors, educational facilities for the colored race in the South were meager, and in many sections there were no institutions of higher education for the Negro. In consequence of a vision translated into the work of his mind and hand, the Slater Industrial and State Normal School was launched in the basement of a church in the eastern part or section of the city in 1892. Handicapped by lack of resources, the institution grew in size and influence as time passed, and its usefulness became so evident that it became a State institution during the administration of Governor Glenn.

"The prestige of Dr. Atkins has grown through the years, and he has often been compared in a favorable

light with Booker T. Washington and other outstanding leaders of the colored race, who have since the days of slavery, pioneered in the struggle to lift the Negro out of the chaos of illiteracy and blaze the trail to a better philosophy of living. With diligence and fortitude, he has used the inadequate tools which came to his hand, building solidly a great structure for the advancement of his people."

Mr. Fries announced that the board of trustees had accepted Dr. Atkins' resignation "with profound sorrow and deep regret" and, being unwilling to dispense entirely with his services, had elected him president emeritus, which position he held for the rest of his life at a somewhat reduced salary. The trustees then elected Francis L. Atkins, son of Dr. Atkins, president of the college. Mr. Atkins had been dean for three years.

Following his retirement from active work, Dr. Atkins seemed to improve, and it was thought that his chances for recovery were good. But he suffered a relapse and his condition grew steadily worse. He died on June 28, 1934, at the age of seventy-one years.

## IX

PERHAPS THE BEST STATEMENT of the esteem in which Dr. Atkins was held by the citizens of Winston-Salem is that of H. E. Fries, president of the Southbound Railroad and chairman of the board of trustees of Winston-Salem Teachers' College. He said:

"I came in direct contact with Dr. S. G. Atkins and

labored with him for more than thirty years to establish one of the leading colleges in our State for training of the young people of his race to become useful citizens and particularly efficient teachers.

"During his life, and since his death, his pupils have spread abroad his high ideals as are manifested in many Christian homes.

"Our community is indebted to him for having trained consecrated teachers, honest, and conscientious business and professional men, and for having coöperated in every civic project looking toward the advancement of our community.

"Dr. Atkins at all times had the support of trustees of his institution. He had the confidence of the State and national officials with whom he came in contact and in his appearances before legislative bodies he was always treated with consideration and given a respectful hearing.

"His thorough education, his humility, his earnestness and sincerity secured for him recognition by both church and State as was evidenced by his attendance, as delegate at great church assemblies both in America and Europe.

"During the World War he rendered a great service in the sale of Liberty Bonds and in securing coöperation in other ways from the members of his race.

"Dr. Atkins, in a remarkable degree, retained even to the day of his death the esteem and confidence of both white and colored people.

"Largely through him and his contact and association with trustees of Hampton and members of the General and Southern Education Boards, the great Ogden movement for increased education was organized and developed into the educational conferences through our

Southland that had such a wonderful influence in the development of our present public schools.

"His character was above reproach: honest, industrious, humble and yet aggressive and conservative, he felt he had a mission to perform. These qualifications made him free indeed and honored among the great educators of his day.

"God gave him as the leader of his race at a time when wise conservative leadership was helpful in all interracial problems; and well did he perform his part.

"We shall never look upon his like again. May coming generations follow his wise example and may his race ever feel the full responsibility of citizenship that was always manifested by him. He has been credited with founding that thorough and practical education which was most needed. The pupils were not only educated in the school, but were trained in every mechanical industry, and with a degree of method and skill that inspired the highest measure of pride in the people."

Although Dr. Atkins was singularly modest and self-effacing, he was firm in his opinions and did not hesitate to speak his mind when asked. One of his favorite sayings was that "ignorance should not rule," and this is confirmed in a letter he wrote to Professor P. P. Claxton on January 31, 1899, when he described himself as one of those "who believe in the supremacy of intelligence and character, and government by the most capable." In a letter to the Reverend Julius D. Dreher of Roanoke College, Salem, Virginia, he once said:

"I have always regretted that universal suffrage was given to the Negroes just after the war, but the efforts in our State to make the restriction apply only to colored men strikes me as being very reprehensible. . . . It is

not the 'Jim Crow' car that troubles me; it is the spirit of public sentiment which demands the 'Jim Crow' car."

In speaking before his students one of his favorite mottoes was "self support, self respect, and self defense," but he clearly saw that no race could rise in America without the co-operation of all others, and this sentiment he expressed in a letter to Colonel J. S. Carr in 1899 when he wrote, "It is impossible for the colored people of the State to be elevated except with the aid and good will of their white neighbors." The kind of help he had in mind is made clear by a letter to Alexander Purvis of Hampton Institute in which he said, "He who helps the colored people to a footing in the soil helps them most."

His strict opinions and straight-forward life made him impatient of self-indulgence and of amusements that seemed to him to be time-wasting. Although he encouraged his students to take part in extracurricular activities, he was skeptical about the value of athletics in so far as athletic events drew reckless crowds. "Avoid crowds" was the counsel he often gave to his own people. By instinct and upbringing he disliked useless frivolities. In an era when his students were wont to break out in strange apparel he once said to an assembly of them, "You can't wear pegtop breeches and yellow shoes on your head."

He was steadfast in his belief in the sanative and stabilizing influence of home life and he constantly strove to have the colored people convert their homes into not only social but cultural centres. His success in this respect brought him the regard of the whole city of Winston-Salem, and this city has preserved his memory by giving the great name of Atkins to a street and a public school.

James Benson Dudley

*and the*

*Agricultural and Technical  
College in Greensboro*



COMMITTEE TO PREPARE A BRIEF SKETCH OF

THE LIFE OF

JAMES BENSON DUDLEY

Woman's College of the University of North Carolina  
Greensboro, N. C.

PROFESSOR ALEX M. ARNETT, FACULTY ADVISER

MISS MARIE MOORE

MISS LELA HOOKER

MISS RETA ANDREWS

MISS JEANETTE PIATT

MISS MARY KATHERINE PROCTOR

MISS KATHERINE AYCOCK

MISS MARTHA ELEANOR FLOYD

The Agricultural and Technical College  
Greensboro, N. C.

DEAN WARMOTH T. GIBBS, FACULTY ADVISER

MISS DORIS E. BOYD

MR. VIRGIL STROUD

MR. WINSTON SALEM LEONARD

ONE DAY IN 1882 TWO SCHOOL teachers met for the first time in the small city of Wilmington, North Carolina, and shook hands. One was a Negro, the other was white. Neither could have been completely at ease, for not only had they previously been strangers to each other, but they were not yet completely adjusted to what was a new situation for both.

The white teacher had only recently arrived from the Bingham School in Orange County, where he had taught Latin. He had been appointed superintendent of the Wilmington schools and had already made his first efforts to convert them from the old "district" schools into graded schools based on a modern system, but he was not yet in the best of spirits.

This white teacher was M. C. S. Noble, later dean of the School of Education at the University of North Carolina, author of *A History of the Public Schools of North Carolina*, and a member of that early group of educators, composed of E. A. Alderman, Charles D. McIver, J. Y. Joyner, Alexander Graham, W. A. Blair, and E. P. Moses, men who aroused the state out of its educational lethargy and put its schools on a new founda-

tion. We have Dr. Noble's own words for his feelings as he first gazed on the old Union School for whites, "I believe that, as I stood there looking, for the first time, at that old and unsightly building, I was the most despondent school man ever seen in North Carolina."<sup>1</sup>

The Negro teacher was James Benson Dudley, principal of the Peabody School in Wilmington, who was later to become president of the Agricultural and Technical College in Greensboro. This first meeting with Dr. Noble was the beginning of a long association and friendship, not interrupted by the removal of the one to Chapel Hill and the other to Greensboro; for Dr. Noble subsequently became chairman of the board of trustees of the Agricultural and Technical College and for many years was foremost among its counsellors.

This long association bore fruit in more than one respect. For example, President Dudley wrote this in his 1908 report to the trustees:

"Every graduate of the Agricultural and Mechanical College [as it was then called] who returns to the farm and increases its productive capacity increases the productive capacity of the State and thereby adds to its total wealth. . . . Nearly all schools for Negroes are well equipped for mechanical training, but none are properly equipped for agricultural training. Every Southern State has spent on an average ten times as much money for mechanical training as for agricultural training, notwithstanding the fact that less than 1 per cent of Negroes are engaged in mechanical pursuits, as against 90 per cent in agricultural pursuits. It is hoped that

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<sup>1</sup> *The Wilmington Public School System: Some Recollections of Its Organization* (Wilmington, 1908).



*James Benson Dudley*



North Carolina, being the most progressive Southern State, will be the first to remedy this serious defect in Negro education by appropriating sufficient funds for a modern agricultural building at the Agricultural and Mechanical College for the Colored Race."

This building was in due course obtained and was promptly named Noble Hall.

At this period—the eighties—in North Carolina educational history there were reasons for despondency. For according to the 1883 report of J. C. Scarborough, state superintendent of public instruction, the 3,857 school buildings then existing in North Carolina had an average value of only \$95.32. The average length of the school term in ninety-one counties was only twelve and a half weeks. The average salary of white teachers was \$24.11 monthly, while that of colored teachers was \$19.93; and in this same year, 1883, Superintendent Scarborough reported to Governor T. J. Jarvis that the state had 58,218 illiterate white voters and 87,076 illiterate Negro voters, the total illiterate population over ten years old being more than 38 per cent. A farm hand earned \$8.00 or \$9.00 a month, with "rations."

"In other words," as Dr. Noble wrote in the history just mentioned, "his entire month's wages would not pay his child's board and other expenses at school for a month."

The hard and trying conditions, economic, educational, and political, which faced James B. Dudley in the last two decades of the nineteenth century, instead of making him despondent and hesitant, seemed to have stimulated and inspired him to a life of useful activity. His whole later career illustrates the philosophy of the poet, "to strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield."

## I

TWO YEARS PRIOR to this meeting with his new superintendent, Dudley had been teaching in a small rural school in Sampson County, with eighty students enrolled; and, although he had received much encouragement there, he was no doubt glad to return to Wilmington, where the people and conditions were familiar to him. He had been born there on November 2, 1859, at a moment when the clouds of the War Between the States were already gathering.

Dudley was born a slave, but both in his parents and upbringing he was singularly fortunate. His father, John Bishop Dudley, a skilled and highly regarded carpenter, and his uneducated but ambitious mother, Annie Hatch Dudley, were owned by Governor Edward B. Dudley (1789-1855), one of the most famous and progressive of North Carolina governors; and through him "Jimmy" Dudley and his parents received advantages not usual to the colored people of that day.

Governor Dudley was known as "the great internal improver" and railroad builder. His eulogist, Robert H. Cowan, in a memorial oration before the stockholders of the Wilmington and Weldon Railroad Company in 1855, said of him: "He was himself a living example of the fact that 'some men are born noble.'" The Governor was an early advocate of better education. He urged the

establishment of a school for the training of teachers and the creation of a permanent state school commissioner. In his administration was passed the "common school bill" which provided for schoolhouses seating not less than fifty children. He has left this picture of conditions as he saw them, in his inaugural address of 1836:

"As a State we stand fifth in population, first in climate, equal in soil, minerals, and ores, with superior advantages for manufacturing; and with a hardy, industrious and economical people. Yet with such unequalled natural facilities, we are actually least in the scale of relative wealth and enterprise, and our condition is daily becoming worse. Our lands are depressed in price, fallow and deserted. Our manufacturing advantages are unimproved. Our stores of mineral wealth are undisturbed, and our colleges and schools are languishing from neglect."

Under the influence of this energetic man, with his special interest in education and progress, it is not strange that Jimmy Dudley's parents sent their son early to school.

"Before the public schools for Negroes were established in Wilmington, little Jimmy was taken to private teachers,"<sup>2</sup> writes Dudley's daughter, Mrs. S. B. Jones. "Thus when he entered the public school in his native city he was more advanced than the other boys of his age and soon was able to finish the common school course. His teacher, Miss Ella Roper, a gentlewoman from New England, was deeply interested in this prom-

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<sup>2</sup> These teachers were supplied by the Soldiers' Memorial Society of Boston, the American Unitarian Association, and the Young Ladies' Union Benevolent Society, all of which opened schools in Wilmington in 1867.



ising young pupil and gave him special instruction in Latin and higher mathematics until his parents could procure the money to send him to study in the Institute for Colored Youths in Philadelphia, Pa. This interest of Miss Roper in the small boy followed him throughout her life, and she lived to a ripe old age in her Massachusetts home. The boy never outgrew the attachment to his teacher, and derived much inspiration and encouragement from her letters. He could always count on her sympathetic understanding. Even when blindness overtook her, she never failed him: with her own hands she wrote him regularly."

Of his experiences in the Philadelphia school little is known beyond the fact that he did satisfactory work. During his summer vacations he worked with his father and learned the carpenter's trade. He was thus able to help pay his expenses at school.

As soon as he was prepared to enter, he went to Shaw University in Raleigh. There, we learn, he was often in hot water because of his mischievous pranks, for along with his serious ambitions he had a sense of humor—and it never deserted him. His professors all liked him and spoke highly of his work.

When Dudley finished at Shaw, his parents wanted to send him to Harvard University, but he was unwilling to burden them further. He wanted to teach, both in order to make his own way and also to be of service to his people.

As his first venture in educational activities, young Dudley took the state examination which was required in order to get a teacher's certificate. In 1880 at the age of twenty-one he received his certificate to teach the first grade in the school in Sampson County.

His work was so convincing that the following year, without making application for the position, Dudley was elected principal of the Peabody School in Wilmington. Here he labored for fifteen years. Not only did he pay close attention to his school, but he was also active in religious, social, civil, economic, and political affairs. He found time to edit for a while the *Wilmington Chronicle*, a Negro weekly. Through this paper and the Perpetual Building and Loan Association, which he organized, he encouraged thrift, economy, and enterprise among his people. His activities in social and fraternal organizations acquainted him not only with the affairs of North Carolina and New Hanover County but also with national and foreign affairs. For twenty years he was foreign correspondent for the Grand Lodge of Masons. Although his brother-in-law was registrar of deeds of New Hanover County, there is no evidence that he sought political office for himself. He was, however, much interested in politics. Several times he represented the Republican party in county and state conventions, and in 1896 he was elected to the Republican National Convention, which met in St. Louis. This was the convention which nominated William McKinley for president.

In 1882 Dudley married Susan Wright Sampson of Wilmington, a well-educated young woman who had attended Wilberforce University in Ohio and who had marked literary and artistic gifts. She became an able co-worker with her husband in the Peabody School. Their daughter Vivian became the wife of Dr. S. B. Jones, a former instructor at the Agricultural and Technical College at Greensboro. Dr. and Mrs. Jones later made their home at St. Kitts in the British West Indies.

At Greensboro Mrs. Dudley took an active interest in the college, encouraged an interest in the drama, and wrote the A. and T. song.

Dudley's interest in education brought him into the State Teachers' Association for Negroes and for six years he was its president. As a leader in the Farmers' Alliance movement he helped to win the legislation that provided for the establishment of what was first called the Agricultural and Mechanical (later Agricultural and Technical) College at Greensboro. It was founded in 1891. Five years later Dudley was suddenly and unexpectedly made its president. According to the *New York Age*, it came about in this way:

"The legislature of 1895 appointed Professor Dudley a member of the Board of Trustees of the A. and M. College. . . . When the board met in May the same year in its annual meeting, he was elected its secretary. . . . The following year in May, 1896 it became necessary to elect another president of the College on account of the resignation of Professor J. O. Crosby, its first president.

"Among the number of applicants for the presidency was a man who is a native of the state and who had not only a state-wide but a national reputation as an educator. He unquestionably had the approval of every member of the board for the place, even including Professor Dudley, who was not an applicant. In response to their invitation, this educator appeared before the board while in their annual session, and after answering several questions, seemingly satisfactorily, would have been unanimously elected but for the fact he requested a little time to decide whether or not he would accept.

"The trustees having been in session already two days,

expressed themselves as being unwilling to hold over another day to await the decision of the candidate who was their choice. Therefore, soon after their return for the afternoon session, the chairman, Col. Keogh, said, 'Gentlemen, I don't know what you may think about it, but I see no reason why we should wait longer to discharge our duty. I believe we have right here among our associates good presidential timber in the person of our secretary, Professor Dudley, the principal of the Peabody School in Wilmington. What do you say?'"

After this suggestion, Dudley was unanimously elected second president of the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Greensboro. Here he served for twenty-nine years.

## II

IN 1898 OCCURRED an episode deeply disturbing to President Dudley. He was busy with his duties at Greensboro when he received word that rioting had broken out between Negroes and whites in Wilmington. The news amazed him, for in his native city, which was by nature a conservative one, relations between the races had never been strained by violence; his parents had always been esteemed by the family of Governor Dudley; his teachers had been white people; and he had been accustomed to friendly co-operation from white educators.

What most alarmed him was the fact that his wife and two daughters were in Wilmington. He at once prepared to go to their rescue. His friends tried to restrain

him, but when the news arrived that several Negroes had been killed in Wilmington, that armed men, after wrecking a Negro printing plant, were patrolling the streets, and that Negroes were fleeing to the woods and swamps, Dudley at once took a train for the troubled city. He arrived there unmolested, was assured by the mayor that neither he nor his family would be harmed, and was escorted to his wife's home by a police squad. He brought his family out safely and was glad to learn that not even the street in which they lived had been disturbed.

Dudley did not permit this episode to embitter him. He knew that the outbreak had arisen over questions of politics, and by now he was willing to relinquish his interest in politics for his much greater interest in education. By that, and by the training of the hand and head, he was confident that his people would rise above their present difficulties. He wanted the Negro to become "a producer, an economic citizen," for as he said in 1908:

"The Negro in North Carolina owns 53,996 farms, or 7.2 per cent of the total number of farms in the State. These farms contain 2,894,200 acres of land, or 7.6 per cent of the total farm acreage of the State. If the production of the Negro farms in North Carolina could be increased \$1.04 per acre, it would increase the productive capacity of the State by \$3,000,000."

To increase the productive capacity of the state and to add to its wealth, to help to raise it out of its poverty and backwardness, to place it in the front rank of progressive states through the trained energy and intelligence of its youth—these were Dudley's aims and dreams, and to their realization he now completely devoted himself.

## III

WHEN DUDLEY ASSUMED the presidency of the college at Greensboro, it was but a humble institution. Fifty-eight students lived in the one small brick dormitory. They pursued their studies under eight teachers in the one classroom building. Water was obtained from one well on a campus that covered twenty-six acres. The total value of the college in 1896 was estimated at only fifty thousand dollars.

During the first five years of the life of the institution, the federal government had paid nearly all of its running expenses under the Morrill Act of 1862 and the second Morrill Act of 1890. In 1893 the General Assembly had voted \$10,000 for a main building, followed by \$9,000 for a mechanical building. Dudley at once asked for larger funds for new buildings and improved facilities.

At the end of his twenty-nine years in the presidency, there were thirteen buildings on the campus, among which were new dormitories, a laundry, a farm building, a central heating plant, a garage, and a large dining hall. Five were fireproof. The enrollment had increased from 58 to 476 students during the regular winter session and to approximately 500 during the summer session. Forty-six teachers and officers had replaced the eight instructors present in 1896. The college site cov-

ered 100 acres of land. Both the state and federal governments were aiding in the support of its million-dollar plant.

In addition to these improvements in the physical make-up of the college, there were expansions in the curriculum. Emphasis was placed on the agricultural and mechanical arts. The primary aim was to enable Negro boys and girls to become trained workers who would be able to raise the standards of living among their people. The following courses were taught: bricklaying, auto mechanics, shoemaking, animal husbandry, mattress and broom making, blacksmithing, horticulture and floriculture, carpentry, poultry raising, tailoring, wood turning, electrical engineering, and domestic science. There was also a teacher-training department; and, of course, broad subjects of general culture were included.

With the great expansion of the physical plant, the increased student enrollment, the growth and strengthening of the faculty, and the broadening of the curriculum, the demand for graduates from the A. and M. College increased in even greater proportion. A larger percentage of its alumni were employed and earned better salaries than the alumni of many older institutions which were teaching practically the same courses. President Dudley said on one occasion when asked about the progress and general standing of A. and M. College, "The true status of a school can best be measured by the success of its students."

Dr. P. P. Claxton, United States commissioner of education, said that the Agricultural and Technical College in Greensboro was one of the best technical schools for Negroes to be found anywhere. (The name of the

college had been changed by the legislators of North Carolina in 1916.) Dr. J. H. Dillard, in replying to a question as to the best training schools for Negroes, said that from his observations the A. and T. College in Greensboro was certainly one of the best.

## IV

DUDLEY WAS KEENLY INTERESTED in improving his own education as well as that of the youth of North Carolina. When he began his summer school studies at Harvard University perhaps he recalled the earlier ambitions of his parents. He later attended Livingstone College, Salisbury, North Carolina, where he received the degree of Master of Arts. Soon afterward the degree of Doctor of Laws was conferred upon him by Wilberforce University.

Dr. Dudley, as he was called after he received the L.L.D. degree, was an uncompromising champion of the cause of education. He attended numerous conventions and conferences, where he studied men as well as ideas; he read widely; he became acquainted with the details of the curriculum of each department in the college, so that he might know whether the instructors were meeting the needs of their students. In fact, he became a master of detail. He not only sent his co-workers throughout the state, but he himself went about lecturing in behalf of educational advancement. Meanwhile he taught history and civics.



"Dr. Dudley did everything in his power to improve conditions at A. and T.," said the *Readers' Forum*. "He made use of a rather spectacular method for the securing of annual appropriations. It was his general custom to invite the alumni to meet with the legislature in Raleigh each year. In this manner, Dr. Dudley felt that the various needs could be more thoroughly emphasized. This story is told of him: he was requesting some friends in Wilmington to go to Raleigh to aid him in securing a \$5,000 appropriation. One of his friends assured him that he could get \$100,000 if it were necessary. Another of his friends said that it was the character of Dr. Dudley, which was responsible for the appropriation of \$615,000 for the college."

In 1912 Dr. Dudley, with the assistance of Professor J. H. Bluford, director of the agricultural department of the college, organized the State Farmers' Union and Co-operative Society. This organization sponsored local unions in each county in the state. Its headquarters were at A. and T. College. The aims of the organization were to discourage the credit and mortgage system among Negro farmers in the state; to assist them in the buying and selling of products; to control methods of production and the distribution of farm products; and to secure uniform prices. Through the interest in and work of the leaders of this movement, standards of living among the Negro farmers of North Carolina were raised to a higher level than they had ever reached before. Dr. Dudley remained vitally interested in the promotion of agriculture in the state, because he realized the conditions on most North Carolina farms, which in his day were in some respects no better than those described by Governor Dudley in 1836.

When America declared war on Germany in 1917, Dr. Dudley lost no opportunity to urge his people to be loyal to the cause of America and the Allies. Soon after war was declared, A. and T. College was transformed into a military training camp. It gained the distinction of training more soldiers than any other Negro land-grant college in the country. He impressed upon his people the fact that the loyalty of their fathers to their country stood out as an example to be followed. In an address at A. and T. College in June, 1917, he said:

"Nowhere in the world has any race of people under similar circumstances shown such loyalty to its country as has the Negro race, and this rich heritage which is ours, during the time when the country is in one of the greatest crises of its history, must not be reflected upon by any of us. In every war and conflict that our country has engaged in, we have as a race been loyal; and I do not think it fitting that any of us should at this time, when our country needs our patriotism more than ever, air our grievances. This is not the time to discuss our racial conflicts."

When the war was over, Dr. Dudley was eager for his people to receive national recognition for their services. Five days after the armistice was signed he wrote the following letter to President Wilson:

Greensboro, N. C., November 16, 1918

THE PRESIDENT  
EXECUTIVE MANSION  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

SIR: In connection with the close of the great war, we have read today in the daily news reports the following in reference to our Negro fighters:

"When the fighting ceased, the most advanced section of the western front was held by the American troops who were brigaded with the 7th French Army. They were formerly the 15th N. Y. Infantry, the famous Negro regiment. With the French and Senegalese troops, they held the town of Thonn."

Our hearts were gladdened to read that an entire Negro regiment was cited to be decorated with the war cross for unusually heroic activity. We have observed with inexpressible joy that the Negroes of America have responded to every call of our country, whether it be our money, our blood, or our lives.

And now, in behalf of our students and faculty, over 100 of whom are now with that "famous Negro regiment" and other regiments "over there"; in behalf of the hundreds of thousands of Negro soldiers who helped to win the victory for world democracy; in behalf of the twelve millions of American Negroes who have gladly answered every call of the country, the faculty of the Negro A. and T. College respectfully presents to your distinguished consideration the justice of the establishment of a free state or states to be composed of African territory wrested from German territory and oppression. We admit the present incompetency of the natives, but we respectfully urge the establishment of an international commission or protectorate until the natives should become qualified to assume the responsibilities of self-government.

We do most respectfully invoke the great influence of your exalted position in behalf of our plea, and urge you, to whom the world is now looking as the most distinguished spokesman of world democracy, that you present this cause to the peace conference that is soon to

assemble and thereby assist the Negroes of the world to receive an equitable share in the fruits of the great war for democracy that has happily ended.

With assurances of most respectful considerations on behalf of the faculty of the Agricultural and Technical College, we have the honor to be

Very respectfully,  
JAS. B. DUDLEY, *President*  
C. WINSLOW, *Secretary*

This letter received much favorable comment, as may be seen from the following editorial, which appeared in the *Greensboro Daily Record* on November 16, 1918:

"That letter President Dudley sends asking for a Negro free state in Africa is quite the thing. Why not? The Negroes played an important part in the war; they have been praised by the great generals, and if they want a free state in some of the territory which belongs to them, why not give it to them? . . . President Dudley may have started something better than he dreamed."

But the proposal was lost sight of in the long disputes that at length eventuated in the Versailles peace treaty.

In 1920 Dr. Dudley was appointed by the Governor of North Carolina as state commissioner for the National Memorial Association. In recognition of the services of the Negro race to the United States during the war, this association was formed to advocate the erection of a memorial in Washington, D. C., in honor of the Negro soldiers and sailors who had fought for the cause of the Allies. On this commission, as in all other positions of trust, Dr. Dudley served with marked fidelity, with credit to himself, his race, and his country.

## V

PERHAPS DR. DUDLEY'S most salient contribution to the state, aside from his educational labors, was in the field of interracial co-operation. In all interracial matters he acted with patience and understanding. The state has produced few men who have done so much to promote co-operation between the races. In his frequent lectures and speeches before interracial groups, he spoke frankly and fearlessly. He was always greatly admired by his auditors because of his sincerity and earnestness. He was chairman of the Negro division of the Greensboro Interracial Committee. He enjoyed the confidence of all classes and served as a connecting link between the two races.

Dr. Dudley was keenly interested in debating and encouraged this activity among the four classes at the college. The students also participated in intercollegiate debating. As a reward to the most outstanding debater, Dr. Dudley presented a cup which came to be called "the Dudley Cup." His interest in art and literature is shown in his many references to such activities in his speeches. As a result of his encouragement and support of the Oriental Organization for the Recovery and Preservation of the Literature and Art of the Ancient Peoples of the East, he was made an honorary member of the organization.

Dr. Dudley's final undertaking at A. and T. College was his struggle to obtain a half-million dollars for new equipment and buildings, in order that the college might be able to function more efficiently. At that time he was not very strong, and it is believed that the extra exertion hastened his death. Suffering from a severe headache, he went home to rest one Thursday afternoon during his sixty-sixth year. He remained at home on Friday and attended to college business in his room. But on Saturday he became worse and then passed away on the night of April 4, 1925.

Out of respect to him classes were suspended at A. and T. College. Funeral services were held on Tuesday in Murphey Hall. Friends of both races paid tribute to him and, as his body passed for the last time under the college arch on the way to the train, taps were sounded. At St. Stephens Church in Wilmington another funeral service was held; and his burial in the Pine Forest Cemetery of that city was conducted with the full Masonic ceremony.

## VI

IN AN EDITORIAL EULOGY, May 3, 1925, the *Greensboro Daily News* pronounced him "a thoroughbred in every respect." One of Dr. Dudley's main characteristics was his courtesy to all people. He was as polite to students as to members of the faculty. The following incident

well illustrates this trait. A case arose which involved friction between an instructor and a student. The student, who was expecting to graduate from the college in June, was completing his work for the first quarter of his senior year. The teacher gave him a failing grade, thus apparently ending his hopes of graduating that year. The student, feeling he had been treated unjustly, went to Dr. Dudley, armed with his examination paper. Dr. Dudley listened to his plea; then, after looking at the paper, he erased the name of the student and the grade. He worked out a plan by which he felt that the student would be treated justly. He called in faculty members from the science, agricultural, and technical departments of the college. None knew of the conflict. Each was requested to appraise the paper. After each had given the paper a passing grade, Dr. Dudley directed that the student receive full credit.

Another decision which indicated that Dr. Dudley believed that all of his people should be treated alike was that the students and faculty members should receive the same kind of food and eat together in the college dining hall. Again, when Dr. Dudley was called upon to settle a problem that had aroused the entire student body, he was able to reach a satisfactory settlement. During the early development of the college, oilcloth was used on the tables in the dining hall. Some years later the students felt that their fees were sufficient to permit the use of linen. The supervisor of the dining hall did not seriously consider the demand; and soon threats of a student strike were heard about the campus. Dr. Dudley immediately called a joint meeting of the faculty and representatives from the student body. When this group, after much discussion, was unable to arrive at a

solution, Dr. Dudley arose and said: "There are probably many students here, who represent homes where oilcloths are being used on the tables, probably some come from homes where no cloths of any kind are used on tables; yet do such facts justify our case? Since it is one of our aims to train individuals to raise their standards of living, it is of great importance that we secure, as far as possible, equipment in all phases of our activities which will develop useful habits among our students." The members present at the discussion at once agreed unanimously to use linen cloths on the dining-hall tables.

In dealings with all persons Dr. Dudley was invariably tactful. He was a man of massive frame and great physical poise. He won and held many friends, some of whom were noted leaders among the white population of North Carolina. Among these, besides Dr. M. C. S. Noble, were United States Senator F. M. Simmons; State Senator A. M. Scales; and Dr. W. C. Jackson, dean of administration of the Woman's College of the University of North Carolina who was a close friend of President Dudley and was long associated with him on the North Carolina Interracial Commission.

"I knew President J. B. Dudley for twenty years. It was a privilege to count him as a personal friend," said Dr. Jackson. "I had the opportunity to know him both as a man and as an educator and citizen. He possessed, in a high degree, integrity, diplomacy, common sense, and courage. One of the governors of North Carolina was accustomed to say that he, Dr. Dudley, was the most polite man in the State. Back of this courtesy was a fine understanding of, and consideration for, not only all his own people but all people. In his day he was the best intermediary in the State between the white man and the



Negro. He did not misrepresent or fail either group. While he stood for his own people, his understanding and his diplomacy enabled him to reach the white people of the State with unusual effectiveness.

"He was an able leader in the building up of the college of which he was president for so long a time. He showed great courage, patience, and intelligence. In the years to come he will be rated one of the most valuable servants of the State of North Carolina.

"He was proud of the school, of the capacities it had aided in training and demonstrating, proud of his State, proud of the kindly relationship of the races in the Greensboro community. He leaves an imperishable monument . . ."

Many memorials do honor to Dr. Dudley. The college honored him by naming the athletic ground Dudley Field. The board of trustees honored him by naming the administration building Dudley Hall. Greensboro honored him by calling the street on which he lived Dudley Street. Honor to his memory has been paid by the celebration of his birthday as Dudley Day at the college and by naming the new administration building, which had replaced the one destroyed by fire, Dudley Memorial Building. In recognition of all that he had attained for the cause of public school education, the high school for Negroes in Greensboro is called the James B. Dudley High School.

But more impressive than all his personal recognition is the far-reaching influence of his life on countless boys and girls, men and women, who carry out the principles that his life taught them.

At his death, the *Greensboro Daily Record* said in part:

"The death of Dr. James B. Dudley removed from the ranks of the educators of the state the man who has perhaps done more than any other individual to promote a friendly feeling between the races that dwell in North Carolina.

"In his death the State and the entire South suffers an almost irreparable loss. His influence was one of peace, of respect, and of constructive work to bring to his race a greater development, a wider field of opportunity, and a better chance to be of service to mankind. Such men are valuable. Their work lives on, but the direct value of their presence and their influence is lost.

"As we become accustomed to a mountain pushing its shaggy head up into the sky, so we become accustomed to the presence of big men, to whatever race they may belong, and are apt to forget what their works mean until they are suddenly taken away . . .

"Dr. James B. Dudley was a diplomat of great ability. Members of the white race listened to his ideas on the development of his race, and Negroes throughout the state were given a truer vision through his teachings and his influence.

"He realized that the future progress of the Negroes was through industry, and his school sought to lead its students into industry with the idea that there they would find the opportunity for greatest service. It may have been the industry of agriculture, of the crafts, or even of the great work of teaching; but back of it all was the one idea that the Negroes must produce service in industry before they try to reach heights that the white race has attained after thousands of years of patient and toilsome plodding.

"The influence of Dr. James B. Dudley will be sadly

missed in the educational system of North Carolina. The Negro race has lost a great leader and humanity has lost a friend."

The *Greensboro Daily News* voiced an equally high appreciation:

"The massive dome surmounting the frame of James B. Dudley was full of wisdom and the great heart of him was true. He may be likened to a brave soldier, fighting the good fight and falling at his post; and indeed he had, and needed, qualities of high courage, high fidelity and generalship. But it is more fitting to say that a master gardener had completed his day's work, surveyed the labor of his industrious hands, and laid him down to rest.

"The span of his busy life stretches back into the day when men were chattel slaves and he was born into that estate. He saw the emergence of a race, his kindred, from involuntary servitude, and the beginning and development of its struggle to achieve freedom from the fetters of circumstance. To that effort of liberation the labor of his life was dedicated, and it was the outpouring of uncommon strength, capacity and devotion. He was an educational leader of his race, a leader in citizenship and himself a citizen for whose services his State will be indebted for all time. He was a diplomat and a philosopher, as he needs must be who forms a link between a State dominated by one race, and another race dwelling within it. He was gentle, and had an infinite, beautiful courtesy that could have proceeded only out of a heart brimming with good will to all humanity.

"Under Dr. Dudley's administration, the Negro land grant institution, North Carolina Agricultural and Technical College, had a history of expanding usefulness, of

constantly broadening service to the race and to the State. His death no doubt was hastened by the labor of the past few months in seeking to show the white leadership of the State the necessity for an increased subsistence to enable the institution to discharge with some degree of satisfaction the duties of an increasing field of opportunity."



Annie Wealthy Holland

*State Supervisor of Negro  
Elementary Schools*

COMMITTEE TO PREPARE A BRIEF SKETCH OF

THE LIFE OF

ANNIE WEALTHY HOLLAND

State College of Agriculture and Engineering of the  
University of North Carolina  
Raleigh, N. C.

PROFESSOR W. N. HICKS, FACULTY ADVISER

MISS MARY ELIZABETH HAMLET MR. G. W. OGLETREE

MR. J. G. GAW

MR. H. G. BROWN

Shaw University  
Raleigh, N. C.

PROFESSOR GEORGE SNOWDEN, FACULTY ADVISER

PROFESSOR BENJAMIN QUARLES, FACULTY ADVISER

MISS WILMATH CARTER

MR. CARL DEVANE

MR. FLOYD HOLLEY

## FROM THE BEGINNING, ANNIE

Wealthy Holland, descendant of a line of slave progenitors, seemed destined for a life of successful achievement in the field of education and public welfare. Although there are few written records in which details of her life are given, if we trace her middle name, "Wealthy," we will learn something of her ancestry. While very little is known of the background of her mother, much is evident concerning her father.

According to her daughter, Mrs. Ethel L. Harris of Franklin, Virginia, Annie Wealthy Holland's parents, the Daughtrys, lived on the same plantation in southeastern Virginia for more than two generations. As was the usual slave-day custom of keeping certain men at work on specified jobs, her great-grandfather was used as a skilled laborer in connection with blacksmith work and the general upkeep of mechanical equipment.

Mr. Wealthy, master of the plantation on which the Daughtrys lived, was rather liberal in dealings with his slaves. Frequently he permitted Mrs. Holland's great-grandfather, who had unusual ability, to hold classes for the younger Negroes to instruct them in repairing plows, shoeing mules, and many other activities.



This gifted and ambitious slave must certainly have passed on to his son, Friday Daughtry (Mrs. Holland's grandfather), much of the zeal and thoroughness by which he was characterized, for Friday in 1867 became a freedman, possessed of both self-respect and self-reliance. Beginning with a small twenty-acre plot of land, a mule, and a cow given to him by Mr. Wealthy, he had acquired by the time of his death more than one hundred and fifty acres and was considered a "good liver" in his community.

Friday Daughtry was the father of four sons. All became of age while living on the Wealthy plantation. The eldest son, John, married in 1869 a woman whom everyone called Margaret, no other name ever being given to her. However, just before her marriage to John Daughtry she was christened by a preacher in the community and received the name of Margaret Hill. During the ensuing year John took his wife and settled on a plot of land next to his father and adjacent to the Wealthy plantation. It is not known whether this land was handed down to him by his father or given to him by Mr. Wealthy, but it is believed that the latter made the gift because of his high regard for the family.

John Daughtry lacked the zeal and ambition that characterized his father. Faced with the difficulty of providing a living for his family, he made no great effort to secure land in addition to that which had been given to him. His wife, on the contrary, possessed qualities which forced her to exercise both physical strength and perseverance in order to get ahead. Day after day she bent her back beneath the sun to pick cotton or worked in the kitchen of some white farmhouse, returning home at night to care for her children and to perform other

domestic duties, even to washing great bundles of clothes.

Within eight years after their marriage they were the parents of seven children, and family problems became complex and acute. The oldest child was born in 1871 and was called Annie Wealthy in memory of and in regard for the mistress of the Wealthy plantation.

# I

IN THE PERIOD immediately after the Civil War, reconstruction began first in the schoolhouses and not in the state houses. Missionary teachers were at work in the South before the end of the war, and educational armies of occupation were active in teaching Negroes to read. Regular teachers came from relief societies and from the Freedmen's Bureau. Later, the reconstruction governments in the various Southern states provided the first free public school systems benefiting the Negroes.

The first great difficulty came in obtaining competent teachers. In the beginning the need was supplied through various missionary associations. Financed jointly by religious organizations and the Freedmen's Bureau, most of the teachers in these schools were Northern white men and women who volunteered to come to the South and teach. In some parts of the South, especially Charleston, South Carolina, and Richmond, Virginia, the Negro schools were conducted by native

whites, a condition which prevailed for a number of years until these teachers were replaced by Negroes. Gradually, as qualified Negroes began to graduate from high schools, normal institutes, and colleges, Negro teachers were substituted for whites.

It was under the influence of white teachers in the historic Isle of Wight County, in southeastern Virginia, that Annie Wealthy Holland received her first formal common-school training. To get even a meager education at this age was a struggle, because she had to help care for her younger sisters and brothers. However, after she had lived a few years with her mother in Southampton County, to which place her mother had moved after marrying a second time, Annie's grandfather carried her back to Isle of Wight County. Here she again attended school, taught now by Negroes. After school hours the girl would assist on the farm, which was devoted primarily to the cultivation of sweet potatoes and peanuts. Here on the farm she gained much of the sympathetic understanding of rural problems which showed itself in later years.

Annie Wealthy completed the work of the county school when sixteen years of age, and her grandfather, Friday Daughtry, sent her to Hampton Institute at Hampton, Virginia, where she possibly entered as an eighth-grade industrial student. Her grandfather believed strongly in education as a means of giving every child an opportunity to fit himself for living. Unfortunately, however, his health began to fail near the close of Annie's first year at Hampton and he was unable to assist her further.

At the close of this year, advised by some of her teachers to work at a light occupation because of her ill

health, the young girl went to New York City and hired herself out as nurse to a Mrs. William Hill. From a letter she wrote to Dr. Frissell of Hampton it is easy to learn from her own words how she worked to put herself through school, and what hardships she encountered, as well as something of the expression of her inner self. The letter, written with her characteristic candor and simplicity, follows:

Sunbury, N. C., October 27, 1914

DR. H. B. FRISSELL, PRINCIPAL  
HAMPTON INSTITUTE  
HAMPTON, VIRGINIA

DEAR SIR: I fully intended writing you during the vacation but it seems to me that almost all of my time has been taken with the Home Makers' Club work.

For a long time I have wanted to talk with Miss Hyde and tell her why I did not finish at Hampton, but I could never speak of it without shedding tears. I've waited all these years thinking time would help me to overcome that weakness, but it never will. I decided that I would talk it over with Miss Hyde this summer while at summer normal, but she was away. I decided to relate my story to you and that is why I asked your permission to write just as I was leaving Hampton this summer.

At the close of the school term, the first year I was at Hampton, I went to New York City to earn money to carry me through school the next term. Dr. Sanson, then a pastor of a church on Fifth Avenue near 125th Street, having learned that I was a Hampton student, secured me a situation in a splendid home of a lady named Mrs. William Hill. My work was to care for her

little three-year old daughter. She was going to spend part of her summer at some resort and the remainder of it travelling. Dr. Sanson thought this pleasant and light occupation would be the means of restoring me to health, for I had had malaria in my system for more than twelve months.

In the next fall I returned to Hampton, having earned almost enough money to carry me through school that term. The following spring Mrs. Hill wrote for me to come and stay with her until school opened next fall. Miss Mary Mackie, then Lady Principal, gave me permission to go and I went. During my stay with Mrs. Hill her eight-year old daughter had a fall and injured herself and had to be cared for constantly during the following weeks. She would not let anyone nurse her but me. When she got well my strength was nearly gone. I was under the doctor's treatment for several months and finally had to return home. The next term I could not return to school, although I was strong enough, because I did not have the means. My great uncle that lived just outside the city of Washington, wrote me that I could come there and go to school and he would board me for three dollars per month. My grandfather thought he could pay that, so he sent me there, but just before the term closed I had to go home because he had grown so feeble he wasn't able to give me that support. It was my intention to finish from the grades there and return to Hampton, thinking some way might open up so I could finish from there.

The following fall I was asked to take charge of a school in my home county. I took the examination and made 2nd grade certificate. I accepted the position and



*Annie Wealthy Holland*



had a very successful term. My school closed in May. On the 28th of June of the same year my mother died very suddenly. She left three small children. The youngest, one year old. I then gave up all hope of ever returning to Hampton, for I knew I had to be mother for these children. My grandparents were old and feeble, especially my grandmother. My stepfather was a drunkard and did not support his family at all. I taught two terms, then went to New York and completed a course in dressmaking. Just as I had finished it I had to return home on account of the illness of my grandmother. She requested that I'd marry before she died. Mr. Holland<sup>1</sup> and I changed our date for marriage and did as she requested. She lived only a few days afterward.

I have studied hard and sought every opportunity to improve myself. I finished a summer normal course at Petersburg (Virginia Normal Industrial Institute) and received a diploma. I now hold a special first grade certificate, good for life, granted me by the board of examiners just before taking up this work.

I've tried to be faithful and render the best possible service in the church and school community. I've always felt very humble, felt that I did not have the backing I desired. I've so often felt that I'd give anything to have a diploma from Hampton. I prayed a great deal about it even when I was a girl. I could never understand why I had such obstacles.

Dr. Frissell, I'm sure I've taken too much of your

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<sup>1</sup> A graduate of Hampton Institute in 1884. He left the teaching profession to enter the insurance business. He died at Franklin, Va., Nov. 23, 1925.



valuable time in relating a story so insignificant, but doing so I feel will help me to do what I've tried to all these years—lay it at the feet of Jesus.

Humbly your ex-pupil,

ANNIE W. HOLLAND

*Supervising Ind. T., Gates County [N.C.]*

The foregoing letter is not only a touching history of the early life of Mrs. Holland, but it also presents a vivid picture of the kind of person she was—earnest and steadfast in doing the duty at hand, but never losing hope of reaching higher opportunities.

## II

FINDING IT THUS IMPOSSIBLE to return to school, Mrs. Holland immediately set out upon the career that was to claim her attention the remainder of her life—that of teaching. Having taught nine years previous to 1897, she went that year to Franklin, Virginia, where she worked as assistant to her husband, Willis B. Holland, for five years. All indications point to the fact that she might have remained there longer, had she not asked the county board to send her to the country.

The board granted this favor, and in 1899 Mrs. Holland wrote to a Miss Cleveland that it was her second year in the country, and that the work was indeed enjoyable, although she was ten miles from home.

She now felt somewhat securely and permanently located, but she still had obstacles to encounter, the greatest one being that of poverty. Poorly clad children attended school each day, but when the weather was bad, attendance slackened, for they were forced to remain at home for lack of proper clothing.

Although alert and eager to help right the wrong, Mrs. Holland at first attributed the poverty in the community to slothfulness. When, however, she began to visit individual homes and to discover that the people were unable to better their circumstances, her ingenious teacher-like qualities became assertive, and through the solicitation of small sums of money she was able to purchase articles of wearing apparel for different students. With five dollars given her by a lady in Boston, Mrs. Holland bought shoes for three children who had gone barefoot until this time, which was in the freezing month of January. Three other children also witnessed the kindly appearance of the after-Christmas Santa Claus, for at this time also they received sufficient outing flannel to make each a dress, since none of the three had had a change of dress for the entire fall.

In this community only two families among all the school patrons owned any land whatsoever, and yet in going through the country one could see numerous acres of land lying waste, land that belonged to some old settlers or their ancestors. Negroes in the vicinity were extremely poor, and hence unable to buy land except in small tracts, but the owners would sell only in large tracts. The man with whom Mrs. Holland boarded owned four hundred acres of land positively clear of incumbrances, and he was considered the best situated of all the colored people there.

Exemplifying the spirit of the true, energetic, resourceful teacher, Mrs. Holland set about a none-too-easy task of trying to persuade the people to buy in clubs. Here the co-operative effort expressed itself in the heart of a single individual. Mrs. Holland also started here the temperance work in which she had been interested for ten years. How much better off that neighborhood must have become as a result of her energy and good heart!

If one would destroy existing evils, he must first get at their roots. Mrs. Holland understood the causes of the condition of the persons among whom she worked and was thus able to sympathize with them. She knew that her students' parents did not own their homes, that they had to harvest crops before their children could enter school or attend regularly, and that they often had so little left after settling rents that they had to put their children where they could earn money to buy themselves books and clothing. Consequently she became skillful in helping to solve their problems.

How was she able to accomplish so much with so limited an education? Mrs. Holland's own answer to this question lies in the statement, "I knew I was deficient, so I studied and gathered all the information I could on the subjects I had to teach." During the first five years of her experience as a teacher she had a second-grade certificate. She obtained a first-grade certificate in 1893 and completed the summer normal course at Petersburg, Virginia, in 1903, securing a five-year certificate.

This attitude of faith, patience, and persistence characterized Mrs. Holland's entire life and work. She did not seem to know the meaning of the word fail.

## III

TO FOLLOW IN DETAIL Mrs. Holland's early life as a teacher is not possible, but excerpts from several letters to her friends give a picture, although a meagre one, of her advancement at successive stages in her career. In a letter to Miss Sherman, written on January 7, 1905, we are told that she succeeded her husband as principal:

"You probably noticed in the blank that my husband is not teaching this winter. He was appointed principal of his same school as usual this winter, but resigned just before school opened. I had been appointed his assistant. I then applied for the position as principal and was appointed. I have a very good assistant. At first I felt that I might have a pretty hard going behind a man, who had had charge of the school for fourteen successive years, but I feel quite at home and I think I am getting on very nicely. We have about one hundred and eighteen enrolled."

Then in a letter to Dr. H. B. Frissell, written on January 12, 1909, we note the following:

"This is my fifth term as principal of the school in which I am teaching. Our enrollment is 148 and two of us as teachers. Each year my work is greater. The attendance is better this year than ever before. New pupils are being enrolled daily. Thirty pupils have been enrolled since January 4. Ours is the largest colored

school in the county. For several years the board of trustees has been giving [a term of] six months. We are informed that we will only have five this year on account of shortage of money. We do feel that it is a pity that such a large and well-attended school should have to close up so early. Last year my patrons gave me another month. I had hoped to have gotten another month through Mr. Walker, but he wrote me that I was too late and therefore could not get any help. We hope our appeal did not get in too late this term."

## IV

MEANTIME SHE CONTINUED to work for the organization of Negroes into groups for mutual benefit. Perhaps one of the greatest difficulties confronting Mrs. Holland in the organization of Negroes into co-operative groups was that of distance. Much of her work was carried on in rural sections, where it was very difficult to get the people together at any one time. Nevertheless, she did not relax her efforts, and was successful in leading numerous persons to group activity. Difficulties of organizing such groups in the cities lay in the slow realization by Negroes of their own needs. Gradually, however, as her labors began to advertise the need of co-operation, Mrs. Holland had less and less trouble in forming clubs and associations.

Her first organization of Negroes into clubs for buy-

ing and for other activities was connected with her early teaching experience, but the years from 1905 on were equally significant in her life as an organizer. On October 2, 1911, she went to Gates Institute, Sunbury, North Carolina; from there, in 1912, to Middle Swamp School, Corapeake, North Carolina, and later to Reynoldson.

These years witnessed the development of industrial classes, including cooking and sewing, under the direction of Mrs. Holland. She saw to it that industrial classes were carried on in the twenty-two schools in Gates County. What could have been more practical than teaching boys and girls to use their hands as well as their brains? Through work of this kind, plain men and women were able to visualize in the concrete that vague word "education" which meant so little to them in the abstract, and to realize the close connection between real education and actual life.

Mrs. Holland was not the originator of industrial education in the public schools, nor was she the discoverer of the fact that education should concern itself with personal habits of cleanliness, industry, integrity, and right conduct, but she certainly effectively emphasized the importance of these things. To make it possible to put Negro education on a sound and rational basis, it was necessary to change the opinion of the Negro people in regard to education and labor. They had to see that education, unlinked with daily life, was impractical. It was necessary to make the masses realize the importance of applying what they had learned in school to the ordinary tasks of life. All these things Mrs. Holland attempted to accomplish by organization.

To carry on her work effectively, Mrs. Holland saw the necessity of good material equipment, and she was

always urging the improving of school buildings. In 1912 she wrote from Corapeake:

"I have for the past two years been working hard to interest the people in improvement of school buildings. As a result we are having erected a nice school building that we feel will be a credit to the community. It is to cost \$1,000. When completed, we think it will cost a little more than that. We have just completed a room that was added to one of our school buildings. That will cost a little over \$300. The people gave \$114 in cash, labor, and material; the county \$112; and we have the promise of the balance from the Rosenwald Fund. Other schools are becoming aroused and are planning to erect new buildings. We have several leagues known as clubs and betterment associations."

What initiative labor like this must have necessitated! Organization on such a large scale brought Mrs. Holland in contact not only with various types of people but also with numerous differences in home life. If "a practical idealist is one who keeps his feet on the ground even though his head is in the clouds," such an idealist was Mrs. Holland. She kept in constant and intimate touch with the masses of people. Like the giant who doubled his strength every time he touched the ground, she seemed to renew her strength every time she came in contact with the people. Mrs. Holland constantly emphasized the necessity of better conditions here and now instead of in the future, and taught that the surest means of preserving health and raising living standards was by pooling the energies of all Negroes into societies. Good, better, best—this surely must have been Mrs. Holland's motto, for each year she sought to better the work of the preceding year. Not once was she con-

tented with the position she held, but moved on from one job to another, each advancement coming as a result of her excellent work rather than through mere restlessness.

## V

IN 1915 SHE very efficiently filled the position of State Home Demonstration Agent for North Carolina. In 1919 the December issue of the *North Carolina Health Bulletin* praised her work as Jeanes Fund state supervisor.<sup>2</sup>

As time moved on Mrs. Holland labored diligently as a Jeanes worker until she had forty-five county supervisors under her. Her definite task was to visit the nineteen county training schools, ten city schools, and three state normal schools and offer any assistance possible. She also organized numerous reading circles and teacher-training groups, and made frequent talks in churches—all with the intention of inspiring Negro peo-

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<sup>2</sup> N. C. Newbold, director of the North Carolina division of Negro education, states: "The employment of State supervisor of elementary schools about 1915 was not by the State itself. The salary from that time until 1921 was paid by the Jeanes Fund and by the North Carolina Negro Teachers' Association jointly. In 1921, the legislature passed a bill creating a division of Negro education and appropriated sufficient money for its support. At that time, it was composed of the director and six other persons. Mrs. Holland was continued as State supervisor of elementary schools paid from 1921 by State funds."



ple. A tribute was paid to the practical and original qualities of Mrs. Holland's labors in the *Southern Workman* for August, 1921, which said:

"Some interesting pictures have been received from Mrs. Willis B. Holland, ex-student of Hampton, 1883, who is district agent for North Carolina. Some of the pictures were exhibits of needlework which had been done in various counties of the state, while others were views of fine new Rosenwald schools which have been erected recently. The pictures showed the very encouraging results which are being secured under Mrs. Holland's leadership."

Thanksgiving of the year 1926 witnessed the organization of a prize-play contest in North Carolina; and again the state was in her debt, for she was the originator of such a movement. Though the contest was held under the auspices of the North Carolina Teachers' Association in Salisbury, which contributed twenty-five dollars to the prize fund, it was due to the ingenuity of Mrs. Holland that the contest was started.

## VI

NO ESTIMATE of the work of Mrs. Holland would be complete without mention of the fact that she was the first person to create a colored parent-teacher association in North Carolina. Fully aware that the schools would be bettered through the personal contact of parents with

teachers, Mrs. Holland envisaged an organization that in subsequent years took on large proportions and significance. Calling a meeting of the Teachers' Association in January, 1902, Mrs. Holland made known the purpose of adopting a reading course consisting of books named in the professional course for professional certificates.

"Some of us," said she, "may never accomplish so much as hold a professional certificate, but we still feel it will enlighten our minds and certainly add to our little store of knowledge."

The historian's report by Miss Marie McIver taken from the minutes of the second and third annual sessions of the North Carolina Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers, 1929 and 1930, gives an outline of the whole movement:

"With the beginning of the forward-looking program for Negro education in North Carolina under Mr. N. C. Newbold, director, there arose a need for some kind of organization that would bring the people of the community together to work in the interest of their school. To meet this need, community clubs, betterment associations and community leagues were formed. These organizations did splendid work, especially in raising money.

"As new buildings arose and better trained teachers were employed, the educational leaders throughout the state felt that we needed an organization that would bring parents and teachers together, not to raise money necessarily, but to study the needs of the child and to work together for his development along all lines.

"In 1923-24 a movement was started to organize local parent-teacher associations. The guiding star in this

movement was Mrs. Annie W. Holland, State Supervisor of Elementary Schools. Many community leagues changed into parent-teacher associations. The work spread so rapidly that the larger counties felt that they needed county organizations. Wake, Wayne, and Halifax were among the first counties to have such organizations.

"On April 2, 1927, representative men and women from all sections of the state gathered at Shaw University, Raleigh, North Carolina, to perfect plans for a state organization. Among those present were Dr. W. H. Livers, state and national officer in the Congress of Parents and Teachers; Dr. A. T. Allen, State Superintendent of Public Instruction; Mr. N. C. Newbold, director of the Division of Negro Education; and Mr. G. H. Ferguson, Assistant Director. Twenty-six city and twenty county units, composed of 770 associations with a total membership of 10,117, were represented by delegates.

"The first annual meeting of the North Carolina Congress of Parents and Teachers was held at Shaw University, April 14, 1928. The number of associations had grown to 784 with a total membership of 15,770. Amount of money raised during the year was \$50,-601.51."

The objectives of the Congress of Parents and Teachers as stated in the national by-laws were these: first, to promote child welfare in home, school, church, and community, to raise the standards of home life; second, to bring into closer relation the home and the school, that parents and teachers may co-operate intelligently in the training of the child, and to develop between

educators and the general public such united efforts as will secure for every child the highest advantages in physical, mental, moral, and spiritual education.

Certainly no individual labored more strenuously to accomplish these aims than did Mrs. Holland. She proved her ability as teacher in the classroom, and community worker in the school, church, and home, aiming not at theory alone but at practicality as well.

## VII

THE DEATH OF Mrs. Holland on January 6, 1934, ended a career unique in North Carolina history. It is significant that this devoted servant of public education was not fully appreciated until the final chapter of her life was written and her peaceful power and unpretentious leadership manifested itself no more in the midst of a large circle of friends and associates. Beloved of Negroes and whites alike, it was not realized how great were her labors and influence until she was with them no more.

Mrs. Holland's contribution to public education for her race in North Carolina may be stated in terms of statistics, but not adequately grasped that way. Her life may be reviewed in terms of background, early training, teaching experience, service as a Jeanes teacher, and as state supervisor of colored elementary schools in

North Carolina. She may be hailed as organizer of the Negro Parent-Teacher Association in North Carolina. But her life cannot thus be adequately evaluated. Her highest contribution and her nobility of life are matters qualitative rather than quantitative. The quality of Mrs. Holland's life lay in what she was, rather than in what she achieved in daily life.

Mrs. Holland was not highly educated or even especially brilliant. Her efforts were not spectacular, and there was little of worldly glamour about her career. Many did not know her, and in some instances those who knew her personally took for granted her character and ability.

But Mrs. Holland, although not highly educated in the formal sense, was always an eager searcher after truth and learning. Circumstances denied her the diploma from Hampton Institute that she so much craved, but, after all, diplomas are not education; they are concessions to human frailty. In her own words we have the following touching confession: "I have studied hard and sought every opportunity to improve myself—I'd give anything to have a diploma from Hampton—I prayed a great deal about it when I was a girl—I could never understand why I had so many obstacles."

Her religion gave her life singleness of purpose. Her life was devoted to a great cause within the framework of a greater cause. Her religion made it natural for her to say: "What I've tried to do all these years is to lay my life and services at the feet of Jesus."

A few evaluations of Mrs. Holland's character and accomplishments will reveal her nobility and usefulness. Dr. H. B. Frissell, principal of Hampton Institute, said of her many years before she attained full recognition,

"Mrs. Annie W. Holland is a good teacher, an excellent woman, and a power in her community."

Mrs. Frances Renfrow Doak of Raleigh, who because of vital interest in interracial work in North Carolina was appointed to serve as chairman of an advisory committee that was set up to assist Mrs. Holland in organizing the Negro Parent-Teacher State Association, has said, "Mrs. Holland was a masterful leader, and well do I remember our first conference. She had everything planned to the smallest detail, and presided with dignity and ability. In fact, I have known few more capable women, and during the years I saw her work so purposefully and successfully for her race, my respect and admiration for her constantly deepened."

N. C. Newbold, the director of the division of Negro education in the State Department of Public Instruction, said, "During Mrs. Holland's work as State Supervisor of Negro Elementary Schools she traveled throughout North Carolina meeting county superintendents, boards of education, leading white people and Negroes on many different occasions and in many kinds of work. All these people were her friends; they trusted her and had the highest confidence in her and respect for her. I cannot now remember a single criticism or unkind statement about her work during the whole period she was connected with this department.

"In a high degree she was a peacemaker and organizer of real ability. Frequently superintendents would write when there was some difficulty in a school and request that we send Mrs. Holland to iron out the difficulties. She went, and in practically every case peace and harmony were restored and the work went happily on."

The principals of Negro schools in Raleigh showed

their admiration and respect for Mrs. Holland in the following words which constitute a part of a more complete resolution:

"Though we mourn the absence of this faithful co-worker, it is with joy that we think of her as having joined that ever increasing number who have exchanged the service of Heaven and its glory, where they are enjoying the indescribable blessings of the immediate presence of our Blessed Savior.

"It is with a deep sense of gratitude that we recall her cheerful disposition, ready smile and kindly greeting at all times, her deep interest and joy in the growth and success of modern educational ideals in our own state; her last words, up to the time of her death, were being said in the interest of the children of North Carolina."

When Governor J. C. B. Ehringhaus was informed of Mrs. Holland's death, he said, "I regret to hear of the death of this very faithful employee of the state. She has left behind her a record of service to the state, the educational system, the people, that is commendable in every way. I am glad to pay this tribute to the worthwhileness of her character and labor."

Every person who ever had dealings with Mrs. Holland remembers her hearty ways, loyalty, and tact. As Mr. Newbold said of her, she was pre-eminently a peacemaker. There was no human situation which she did not improve by her sunny disposition and sense of rightness. Education as a means to a richer life never had a more devoted servant.

In 1938, ten years after the founding of the North Carolina Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers by Mrs. Holland, the annual meeting of the organization was

held in the auditorium at Shaw University. The exercises included the planting of a tree on the campus. It was called "the Annie W. Holland tree." It is evidence that Mrs. Holland's labors will not be forgotten as long as trees and schools grow in North Carolina.





Peter Weddick Moore

*and the*

*Elizabeth City State Normal  
School*

COMMITTEE TO PREPARE A BRIEF SKETCH OF

THE LIFE OF

PETER WEDDICK MOORE

East Carolina Teachers' College  
Greenville, N. C.

MISS SALLIE JOYNER DAVIS, FACULTY ADVISER

MISS CAROLYN BRINKLEY      MR. CLIFTON CRAWFORD

MRS. ETHEL VICK CRAWLEY

Elizabeth City State Normal School  
Elizabeth City, N. C.

MISS EVA J. LEWIS, FACULTY ADVISER

MISS ELIZABETH BIAS

MISS EDITH RAYNER

MISS MONICA SPELLMAN

MR. WENDELL JONES

MISS PEARL WARD

MISS REBECCA EVERETT

PETER WEDDICK MOORE, THE eldest of five children, was born near Faison's Depot in Duplin County, June 24, 1858. His parents, Weddick Moore and Alecy Thompson Moore, were slaves. Like their own, his features were typical of his race, showing that no other blood coursed through his veins.

Little is known of his father beyond the fact that he was a slave. It is said that he was killed and secretly buried by the Ku Klux Klan in the stormy period of the Reconstruction for alleged betrayal of the hiding place of some property belonging to a family living in his community. It should be stated in justice to him that he was forced to do this by some Union soldiers.

Moore's mother possessed unusual character and ability. She was an uneducated slave but, like many of her race, she believed with all her heart and soul in education and made every possible sacrifice to send her children to school. Sometimes they went hungry and sometimes without sufficient clothing, but she saw to it that they went. At one time four of her five children were at Shaw University.

The encouragement that she gave her young son Peter became the stabilizing force of his later life. The

ideals which she planted in his young heart reaped a rich harvest in his later years. According to those who remember her, she was deeply religious and believed in the power of prayer.

Few records exist regarding Moore's youth, but the first school he attended was one probably established by the Freedmen's Bureau. There is evidence that there was such a school in the neighborhood in which Moore was born and that it received aid from the Peabody Fund and continued over a period of years.

In his middle teens Moore attended a school taught by a very brilliant Negro named Burke Marable, who was perhaps the second strongest factor in shaping the boy's life. Marable was a former student of Shaw. From there he went to Lincoln University in Oxford, Pennsylvania, and was graduated, probably in its first class. He returned to Sampson County and took charge of a school which he called the Philosophian Academy. It appears that he conducted it for several sessions. Each term was short, but its average attendance was seventy-five pupils. He taught all classes, from beginners to students of Latin and higher mathematics. Whenever he needed assistance, he put one of his more advanced pupils in charge of the beginners' classes.

Judged by his influence in the community, Marable must have been a real teacher. Certain it is that he gave direction to young Moore's career. He seems to have nurtured and concentrated all that was best in the boy's life and to have made him consciously courageous and independent. While under his influence, the boy was so fired with ambition that he seldom used his recess periods for play. To him they were opportunities for more study.

Although Moore had a good teacher and snatched every moment for study, he received but little formal elementary education. Due to North Carolina's poverty,<sup>1</sup> the school terms were short and he had to help his mother support the family. He often hired himself out to the farmers in the county. As labor on the farm then was real work, he found little time to devote to his books.

Once he had the good fortune to work for a very influential family living near Clinton. Before long he made himself so useful that the family became warmly attached to him. He was evidently a house servant, for he learned to cook and to drive. He excelled in the art of coffee-making and was frequently pressed into service when there were guests in the house. He drove the family carriage for the two daughters who attended a school for young ladies in Clinton. Every morning he was admonished by his mistress to be careful not to drive the horses too fast. He was always careful; but invariably, when he reached the outskirts of the town, the girls begged him to give rein to the horses so that they might go at full speed through the streets leading to the school.

Persons who knew Peter Moore well in later life will recognize in his youthful attitudes described above traits of character which followed him throughout his career, faithful to every trust, and every responsibility placed upon him, and yet agreeable, unruffled, obliging without sacrificing any principle or obligation.

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<sup>1</sup> In 1883 North Carolina spent only \$306,805 for white schools and \$260,955 for colored schools. See R. D. W. Connor and Clarence Poe, *The Life and Speeches of Charles Brantley Aycock* (Garden City, N. Y., Doubleday, Page & Co., 1912), p. 259.

## I

AT THE AGE OF TWENTY, Moore obtained a certificate to teach in a one-teacher school in a district known as Holly Grove, about ten miles from Clinton. As the school term was short, he worked a little piece of ground as tenant and made a bale of cotton.

The money he earned from his teaching and the sale of his cotton enabled him to enter Shaw University in the fall of 1880. After he had been there two years, he was appointed a student instructor for the following two years by the president, Dr. H. M. Tupper. The friendship that grew out of the association with the president was perhaps as vital an influence in the young instructor's mature years as that of his mother and his teacher in his boyhood.

As it was necessary for Moore to have additional means of support, he worked in a brickyard on the grounds of the school and in a foundry near by. The foundry was established by Joseph Separk, a member of the Baptist Church for white people in Raleigh, partly for the purpose of providing work for the Shaw students. Mr. Separk and other leading members of the church showed great interest in the university, partly because it had grown out of the efforts of a Northern Baptist home missionary society during Reconstruction and partly because of the type of boy who attended the school.



*From a Painting*

*Peter Weddick Moore*





At Shaw, Moore was known as an industrious student. W. S. Etheridge, principal of the Negro high school at Windsor, North Carolina, said of him:

"Dr. Moore and I were classmates at Shaw University. He was well-informed on all current events and a close and hard student. While other students were engaged in sports of various kinds, he was behind closed doors studying. He was popular with the students and the faculty. Science and mathematics were his favorite studies and the men who taught them were among his warmest friends."

Dr. Moore received his A.B. degree from Shaw in 1887. Later the university conferred upon him the M.A. and LL.D. degrees in recognition of his contributions to education. When he received his A.B. degree, his formal education was complete—after twenty years of struggle.

Among the formative influences of these years, then, three persons are outstanding: his mother, who gave him the incentive to be somebody; his teacher, Burke Marable, who opened the world of books to him; his educational father, Dr. Tupper, who inspired him to be a thorough teacher.

## II

DURING THE VACATIONS between the terms at Shaw, Moore was encouraged by Superintendent Isham Royal of Sampson County to return to Clinton to teach.

Residents there often praised his clean character and the good record he made as a teacher. In 1884 Superintendent Royal, upon the recommendation of Moore, engaged several Shaw students to teach in the rural schools of the county. Mr. Royal evidently regarded the young man very highly, for he frequently asked him to assist in holding teachers' institutes, sometimes leaving him in entire charge of one.

After leaving Shaw University, Moore taught for a time in the schools of Bertie County. From there he went as assistant to the principal of the State Normal School in Plymouth, North Carolina, where he remained four years. In 1891 the Elizabeth City State Normal School for the Colored Race was established by the General Assembly, and its control was vested in a board of white trustees appointed by the State Board of Education. The duty of the board was the selection of a principal to take charge of the plans for the opening of the school. The chairman of the board, F. F. Cahoon, was sent to Raleigh to consult Major S. M. Finger, state superintendent of public instruction, about Peter Moore, who had been recommended for this position by H. C. Crosby, principal of the Plymouth Normal School. Mr. Cahoon's son, W. L. Cahoon, long a resident of Elizabeth City, accompanied his father on this trip to Raleigh. Concerning it, he said:

"Lasting was the impression which, as a knee-breeches boy, I received from Major Finger as he commented on Peter Moore, a recent graduate of Shaw. Distinctly do I recall that Major Finger said to my father, 'I have observed this young man carefully and I believe he is most promising and that you can make no mistake in selecting him to lead this school.' As years passed and I enjoyed

cordial relations with P. W. Moore, I found that the expectations of Major Finger were in every way fulfilled."

Receiving the appointment a few weeks later, Dr. Moore went to Elizabeth City where he took up the task of establishing the school for which the General Assembly had appropriated the sum of nine hundred dollars. And here in the proud Albemarle section he began his life's chief labor.

### III

WHEN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY appropriated the money to establish and maintain the institution, no provision was made for a site, or a building in which to conduct the school. The citizens of Elizabeth City, with the help of Dr. Moore and his assistant, J. H. Butler, obtained the Rooks Turner Building on what was then known as Body Road Street. There the school opened January 4, 1892, with sixty pupils, twenty of whom were licensed to teach in the public schools of the state.

The second session opened in the fall of the same year and continued until the following June. One hundred and twenty pupils were enrolled, 38 of whom were teachers. The third session, beginning September, 1893, was conducted ten months with an enrollment of 170 students, 58 of whom held certificates to teach. It is

significant that during the first three sessions, 114, or a little more than 30 per cent, were men and women seeking to improve their teaching efficiency.

When the school outgrew the Rooks Turner Building, the trustees in 1894 obtained on Shannon Street a larger building that had been occupied by a parochial school conducted by educational missionaries who had come South during the reconstruction period to help train the Negro. Dr. Moore conducted his school there until 1912, when it was moved to its present site.

The fundamental principle upon which Dr. Moore based his endeavors was that if his students could be trained for better living they would become better teachers. His work during the first ten years is a clear illustration of this principle. He saw that there were primarily two things to do for those who came to him—help them become better teachers by giving them intensive training in subject matter, and help them raise their standards of living.

In his report to State Superintendent J. C. Scarborough, July 3, 1893, he said: "By complying with the tenor of the law touching the establishment of the Normal School System in North Carolina, we have embraced in our curriculum the branches upon which the teachers are examined and are required by law to teach in the public schools—and *we have taught them thoroughly.*"

In his report dated July, 1896, he said: "After assiduous labor, our students are being convinced that the prime and ultimate end of education rests not alone in the ability to obtain from a county examiner a certificate to teach a public school. Certainly they are taught and shown the great importance of the intellectual training

for teachers. They are taught by precept and example that it is no disgrace for any person to work with his or her hands. Our students are being taught the excellence and dignity of right living."

In his report of the following year, 1897, this statement was made: "Much of the work done consisted of real class work in the common branches because the students were deficient in these things. A student cannot be taught very well the methods of teaching arithmetic until he learns how to work arithmetic."

In the next year Dr. Moore attempted some professional work with the graduating class. He used two excellent texts and gave simple lectures on the most efficient methods of teaching. He arranged "practice work" with the preparatory classes and, lacking other help, he caused members of the senior class to teach each other.

For the year 1899-1900 a professional course was added to the curriculum and a practice school was provided where the teaching was to be done by the students of the senior and professional classes under the supervision of the principal of the normal school, until money might be available to employ a critic teacher for the training school. At the close of that year the school had enrolled 180 pupils in the normal department and 35 in the training school.

The reports of the remaining years of the first decade showed the continued growth of the school. That considerable advancement had been made since the opening of the first session in January, 1892, is evidenced by the following: the school had matriculated over fifteen hundred pupils; it had become a two-year normal school with a course of study greatly enriched; it had added a short-term summer session to its regular session; it had

reorganized its practice school so that the professional students could do both the practice work and observation work under the guidance of a trained critic teacher; it had received recognition from the best white and colored citizens in those communities where it was known. In other words, in its first decade it had justified its existence, and in that Dr. Moore had great cause for satisfaction. One feels, however, that he found greater satisfaction in the evidence that the moral status of the young Negro manhood and womanhood of the community had been vastly strengthened by the influence of the school.

During the next decade, 1902-1912, the growth of the school was marked by the introduction of an industrial department and the removal of the school to its present site. In a letter dated June, 1902, to Dr. J. Y. Joyner, then state superintendent of public instruction, Dr. Moore said:

"I fully believe that an industrial department, however limited, would greatly enhance the present usefulness of our school. This conclusion is drawn from my observation of student life. Trained cooks and educated farmers are needed as well as professionally trained teachers."

As there were no state funds available for this purpose, Dr. Moore turned to his local board, which gave him permission to solicit aid among the people in Elizabeth City and the patrons in the twenty-seven counties represented in the school. From these sources he collected nearly \$500. He received, in addition to this amount, \$100 from two friends in Pennsylvania, making in all nearly \$600.

Cooking, sewing, and household economy were taught the next year. But Dr. Moore realized that to make such courses yield the best results, more money, instructors, and a building were needed. "The principal," he said, "has no desire to undertake so arduous a task another year."

He urged the consolidation of the state's seven colored normal schools in order that the smaller number of schools might have sufficient funds to develop an industrial department. "Let the Negro youth, whom the state is educating," he said, "have an opportunity to see the dignity, the utility, and the beauty of educated labor." Urged by Dr. Moore and others, the State Board of Education consolidated the seven schools into three units and placed them under the supervision of a well-trained white teacher. The course of study was rearranged to provide for industrial training. It then became evident to the board that, to do effectively the work required of the schools, each of them needed a permanent plant and equipment. At that time not even the buildings in which the schools were conducted belonged to the state.

The board appealed for help to the towns in which the schools were situated. It promised that if these towns would contribute something toward a fund to secure a site and necessary buildings, the board would seek an appropriation from the General Assembly for that purpose.

The response to the appeal from Elizabeth City was immediate and generous. Through the efforts of its citizens, the normal school, during the next two years, 1904-1906, acquired the following property:



Eighteen acres of land, costing .....	\$1,800
Deed for city lot, valued at .....	3,000
Collections and pledges for building fund ...	2,500
Building fund from the State .....	500
<hr/>	
Total .....	\$7,800

The sum of \$500 which was appropriated by the state was taken from the annual appropriation for current expenses.

The General Assembly in 1907 appropriated \$12,000 for a brick building to be erected on the present site of the school. This building was completed in 1910, but stood idle for two years for lack of dormitory facilities. In 1909 the General Assembly appropriated \$15,000 for a dormitory building. In 1912 the plant was ready for occupancy.

In the meantime the school on Shannon Street showed continued growth. The enrollment of students increased with the years and taxed to the limit the capacity of the teaching staff, which, because of lack of funds, did not keep pace with the numerical growth of the student body.

#### IV

TO RELIEVE THE situation Dr. Moore followed the plan of his old teacher, Burke Marable. He chose the most promising of the advanced students and put them in

charge of certain classes. These student teachers served without remuneration.

The instruction dealt with the fundamental things of books, of industry, of morals. The instruction in books embraced the common school subjects. The instruction in industry included cooking, sewing, agriculture, gardening, and the use of simple tools. Singing was also taught. Upright conduct was insisted upon. Some work with the hands as well as the head was a part of every day's routine. As instruction in books began with the fifth-grade work, the normal training concerned itself with helping those who took the four-year course to acquire some knowledge of the organization of an elementary school of four grades and of methods of teaching the subjects in those grades.

The numerical enlargement and the expansion, though limited, of the departments of instruction made much more work for Dr. Moore. In addition to his executive duties, he did much of the actual teaching, gave a considerable portion of his time to the supervision of the practice school, and, because of the lack of experience and skill in discipline on the part of his instructors, handled all the disciplinary problems. And with it all, he never missed an opportunity to impress upon the students the doctrine that their usefulness would depend upon their character, honesty, intelligent service, and economy of time and money. After twenty years he found much comfort in the fact that "order, attention, conduct, cleanliness and a higher personal regard for self had taken a higher stand in the life of the student body."

The session of 1912-1913 witnessed the opening of the school on its present site in the new buildings that were ready for occupancy.

Dr. Moore during the next ten years continued his efforts to secure a dormitory and a thoroughly equipped industrial building for boys. The new dormitory for girls was planned to accommodate 120, but the first year it was occupied the demand for room was so great that nearly 200 girls were crowded into it. Those who were not able to obtain rooms there boarded in town, as did all the boys.

In 1914 Dr. Moore laid the situation before the state superintendent of public instruction and urged a recommendation to the General Assembly for funds to provide a dormitory and an industrial building for the boys. He said in his report:

"The present conditions interfere with our teaching the boys orderly and industrious habits. Much of the valuable training which they receive is lost because they live in private homes, and I believe it is somewhat risky to educate a live active boy with no reference to the vocational. The school offers no industrial training whatever for the boys. It is situated three quarters of a mile from town, but it does not own a house, or a mule or an ox."

In his reports of the next biennium, 1914-1916, he again called attention to these imperative needs. An examination of his reports and those of the superintendent of the colored normal schools makes one feel that there was much cause for discouragement; but if Dr. Moore felt it, there is no indication of it in his messages to Raleigh. Many times he took occasion to express his appreciation of what the domestic science department had done for the girls.

Persistent appeals for equipment and better housing bore fruit in an appropriation by the General Assembly

of 1917 for a dormitory and an industrial building. The appropriation for the latter, however, was made to meet a conditional offer by the General Education Board.

With an industrial building and additional land which had been recently purchased, to see a thoroughly equipped industrial plant became the dream of Dr. Moore's remaining years of service. His experience had convinced him that the kind of education the youth of his race needed was that which included the training of the eye and the hand as well as the head. He agreed with the founder of Hampton Institute that "industrial education, not only increases learning capacity, but promotes fidelity, accuracy, honesty, persistency and intelligence. The capacity to make a living becomes enlarged into a capacity to make a life."

The reports of the biennium, 1918-1920, showed progress in all departments. In 1918 enrollment reached the high mark of five hundred and fifty students.

The General Assembly of 1919 did not appropriate any funds for permanent improvements, but it did appropriate a larger fund for maintenance than ever before. This enabled Dr. Moore to increase his staff to twenty, to pay better salaries, and to enlarge and enrich the departments of instruction. Along with these expanded appropriations, more emphasis was placed on character building. In his report for 1918-1920 Dr. Moore said: "We desire that every effort exerted by this institution shall result in character-building, since nothing else is worth while. This calls for equipment and preparation, which will enable those who teach to do so efficiently and truthfully. It will also help to avoid that which is superficial and furnish in its stead those fundamental qualities that make character."

## V

THE PHENOMENAL GROWTH of the school at this time increased Dr. Moore's responsibilities tenfold. The burden of carrying on the work for thirty years had demanded a heavy toll of him. His health began to break. The need of an assistant to relieve him of some of the increasing and complicating problems of administration became imperative. Nobody saw this more clearly than did the State Department of Education. In the spring of 1921, N. C. Newbold of the department mentioned the subject to Dr. Moore and suggested that he obtain the services of J. H. Bias, who later became president. At that time Mr. Bias was the principal of one of the state-supported Negro high schools. Dr. Moore received the suggestion without comment except to thank Mr. Newbold for it. But the more he thought of it, the more it worried him. He began to feel that the officials of the department had come to believe he might be out of date, no longer able to manage the affairs of the growing institution.

The following summer while he was taking a vacation in Asheville he wrote to Mr. Newbold and told him how distressed he was over the suggestion that had been made. Mr. Newbold had a conference with him at the Union Station in Asheville. It was plainly evident that Dr. Moore was deeply disturbed. Mr. Newbold said later:

"I hastened to explain that our first desire was to relieve him of most of the petty details which had become an increasing burden to him, so that he might be free to

devote his time and thought to the larger problems of the administration of a rapidly growing normal school; that we felt he was too valuable to wear himself out by having to give most of his time to the grinding details that were then growing up so rapidly in his institution; that we desired to preserve him for many years to guide and direct the institution which he had founded. My explanation seemed to satisfy him. Then he asked whom we had under consideration for the position of dean. When I told him we had thought of Mr. Bias, he said, 'Since we are to have a dean, Mr. Bias is the man I was hoping you would select.' "

It was not long after the Asheville meeting that Mr. Bias received the appointment. The relation between the two men became a close one. On many occasions Dr. Moore expressed his regard for his dean in these words: "My affection for him is that of a father for his son."

Mr. Bias was well qualified to share the responsibilities of administration. He relieved Dr. Moore of many of the burdensome details of administration and managed with such tact and skill that the older man came to depend upon him more and more. Dr. Moore's health, never robust, failed further, and it became evident to those who knew him that he could not carry the responsibilities of his office much longer. The trustees were greatly concerned about him and felt that he should be retired. In a board meeting in the spring of 1928 a set of resolutions was adopted providing for his retirement.

The action of the board was made public when the resolutions were read by the secretary of the board, at the commencement exercises on the night of May 25, 1928. The occasion was a memorable one for Dr. Moore

and for the school. He was made president emeritus by the board and received a salary and a well-furnished house for the remainder of his life. Following are the resolutions read by the secretary:

"As a representative of the Board of Trustees, I bring you special greetings on this occasion, which marks the close of the thirty-seventh session you have served as head of this institution. You have contributed much to your race as an educational pioneer in eastern North Carolina. I am thinking tonight of three distinct contributions you have made to your race, to your community, and to your state.

"The first is service. Living records show that you have unselfishly and unstintingly given yourself, your time, and your money; that you have produced for your race some of the very best teachers, principals, supervisors, ministers, doctors, and housekeepers—all of them results of the service you have rendered as a pioneer conscientious and efficient teacher.

"The second great contribution is leadership. You have set your light on a candlestick where it 'might give light to all those things which are uplifting.' You have been a great Christian leader with a firm faith in the value of good moral character. Before the board you have pleaded the cause of your people as their most worthy representative. Your patience, your caution, your appreciation, your faith in youth, and your wisdom as a leader for your people have set an example that many will do well to follow.

"The third and greatest contribution you have made is character. Your honest, upright, moral, and religious life in this community has been an example that both white and colored look upon with pride. For this great

contribution you can never be fully repaid. We believe your character to be above reproach. The board considers your career to be a career of victory and triumph. You have won the great battles you set out to win, and this institution with its hundreds of graduates and ex-students stand as living witnesses.

"With these sentiments in mind and with the gratitude to our dear Heavenly Father for the services you have rendered, and trusting that you may be spared for many years of usefulness, we are relieving you of all the worries and responsibilities and paying you what we consider the highest honor a board has ever conferred upon anyone in the State of North Carolina, white or colored, by making you president emeritus of this institution; thereby advancing you to a position where the institution will continue to have the benefit of your sound advice, spiritual training, and leadership without being burdened with the detailed hardships of the institution; giving you, too, a good, comfortable home and paying you a salary sufficient to care for your needs as long as you live. Most certainly do we believe this will be true as long as any member of this board has a choice in the matter. The director of Negro Education in North Carolina, Mr. N. C. Newbold, and Governor A. W. McLean both recognize the splendid influence, the powerful good, the long service record, and heartily endorse and approve the action of the board, and we, the members of the board, are delighted to be able to thus honor you.

C. A. COOKE, *Chairman*

H. G. CRAMER, *Treasurer*

MRS. JAMES G. FEARING, *Secretary*

T. E. WHITE

G. R. LITTLE"



After his retirement Dr. Moore insisted that he should continue to do some teaching and for several years he gave courses in classroom management. He continued to live on the campus until his death on April 19, 1934. He died as he would have chosen to die—among the people whom he loved and for whom he had labored so long.

The esteem in which Dr. Moore was held by the white people of Elizabeth City was reflected in the statement issued by Mayor J. B. Flora soon after the news of Dr. Moore's death was made public. Mr. Flora said that the community had sustained its greatest loss in many years. He attributed the absence of racial trouble in the city to the leadership of Dr. Moore and gave him full credit for the unusually high type of Negro citizenship in the community. He suggested that the merchants could show no finer spirit than by closing stores during the hour of the memorial services, which were conducted the following day in the normal school auditorium.

## VI

DR. MOORE's work was not confined to the management of the school. As a member of the Olive Branch Baptist Church of Elizabeth City, he served as a deacon and Sunday-school teacher for many years. He took a deep interest in the establishment of the colored high school and was an unofficial counsellor to the principal and

teachers. The school was first named for the Negro poet, Paul Laurence Dunbar. Two years before Dr. Moore's death, the name was changed to the P. W. Moore High School.

Dr. Moore served as Teachers' Institute conductor for many years in several counties in the eastern part of the state; he was president of the North Carolina Negro Teachers' Association until he was unable to render further service; on two occasions he was chosen by the governor of the state as representative to the National Educational Congress. In every office his efficiency was shown by the way he retained the co-operation of the best element of the two races. His work is for all time memorialized by the school to which he gave thirty-seven years of labor.

Recently N. C. Newbold received from Mrs. Ellen Whitehurst, a colored woman now living in New York but formerly living "in front of the old State Normal School Building from the second session of the school until it was moved to the present building," this tribute to Dr. Moore:

"The work I consider his greatest was the cementing of the ties between the white and the colored people. To him more than to any one else belongs the understanding friendship between your race and mine. P. W. Moore loved not only Elizabeth City but North Carolina. Like him I am proud of the old North State. She was proud of him; may she never be ashamed of me."

W. L. Cahoon, in an intimate account of his acquaintance with Dr. Moore, reveals how the latter won and kept the complete respect of the citizens of Elizabeth City:

"Dr. Moore was truly the personification of courtli-

ness. His manner was gentle, graceful, and dignified; never familiar, never austere, but always reflecting a ruggedness of character that was commanding. I would say that the secret of his remarkable success was not due so much to depth of learning as to strength of character. It was this Gibraltarian character that invariably commanded respect and inspired confidence. Always modest, never obtrusive, he won the respect and even the affection of those who knew him, regardless of race or class. In decorum Dr. Moore was a finished master, and he communicated this quality to those who came within the sphere of his influence. Frequently was this fact made the subject of comment by his white friends who attended the public exercises in the school over which he so admirably presided. I have heard Professor S. L. Sheep, a white contemporary of Dr. Moore, tell his pupils that they would do well to visit the public exercises of the State Normal School and learn from the pupils of Dr. Moore what excellent decorum was observed among the colored pupils there. There was another virtue conspicuous in his life and that was charity. I knew him intimately for more than thirty years and if he ever possessed the slightest prejudice or resentment, I have never discovered it."

In the bitter contest that grew out of the campaign for the constitutional amendment in 1900, Dr. Moore preserved his usual calmness of spirit. He knew that while the law, as drawn, was frankly designed to eliminate the large Negro vote, it was in the long run calculated to advance universal education and so to be an advantage to both races; that by it North Carolina was not refusing the Negro an opportunity to make the most of himself. In the following account Mr. Cahoon gives a graphic

description of a conversation he had with Dr. Moore after the close of the campaign in question:

"In the summer of 1900 I had finished a speaking tour of North Carolina covering a period of more than two months. It was a memorable campaign waged for the adoption of a constitutional amendment, the result of which was to disfranchise the illiterate Negro. Partisan feeling and racial rancor were at fever heat. I closed the campaign in my home town and the afternoon before making my last address, I was seated on the front veranda of my home when I observed Dr. P. W. Moore crossing the street. I called to him; he came over and joined me. We sat there for more than an hour discussing the issues of this historic campaign.

"I remarked to him, 'Professor Moore, I did not have an opportunity to confer with you before entering this campaign. As you know, I am engaged in an effort which, if successful, will result in the disfranchisement of a large majority of your race. I am genuinely anxious to obtain your opinion as to the probable outcome.'

"One could never forget the response of this truly great man and remarkable seer. With soft voice and measured words he said:

"'Mr. Cahoon, this disfranchising amendment to our state constitution will be a blessing in disguise to my race. It will mean the enfranchisement of the literate members of my race. Many of us are trammled and we cannot exercise that political freedom which is so essential to the uplifting of any people. Hugging a delusion incident to emancipation, my race is all too gregarious. Our leaders, therefore, cannot exercise that political freedom which they desire. Our leaders are now subjected to the hectoring of the illiterate of our

race. This disfranchising amendment will not affect the leaders, or the literate members of my race, but it will give to them a political freedom which will enable them to coöperate more actively with the better element of the white race. I entertain an abiding confidence that this disfranchising amendment will bring forth an educational awakening, the like of which has never been witnessed in North Carolina. With the white man's recognized sense of justice, your leaders will hasten to prepare all men, irrespective of race, to exercise the rights of suffrage intelligently. Then my race will vote intelligently upon political principles and no longer will they be actuated by partisan prejudice.'

"Some weeks after this conversation with Dr. Moore, I was in Raleigh, and joined Charles B. Aycock in the lobby of the Yarbrough Hotel. We walked together to the State Capitol. On the way down Fayetteville Street, Mr. Aycock and I were discussing the experiences of the recent campaign. I recited to him just what Mr. Moore had told me some days before. Mr. Aycock stopped suddenly, turned to me, looked me intently in the face, and said, 'That Negro is right: it's the white man's responsibility, and the education of all North Carolinians, regardless of color, is the immediate task before us.'

"About a year or two after the incident above related, I was requested by Mr. Moore to appear with him before the appropriations committee of the General Assembly, in behalf of his school. Mr. Moore and I visited the office of Mr. Aycock, who was the Governor, and as we left the room Governor Aycock called me back and said, 'If there is anything I can do to help this school do not hesitate to command me. That Negro is entitled

to the very best that North Carolina has to give, and it will be my pleasure to see that he gets it.' ”

W. O. Saunders, editor and writer of *Elizabeth City*, shows how Dr. Moore maintained his dignity under all circumstances. He tells this significant story:

“In the spring or summer of 1922, I think it was, the State Normal School for Negroes at Elizabeth City was requested to send its president and the chairman of the board to an interracial conference in Atlanta. I was chairman of the board at the time.

“Dr. Moore and I went up to Norfolk, Virginia, on a certain night to take a Seaboard Air Line train for Atlanta. The train was due to depart around 9 P.M. Dr. Moore asked me to buy his ticket.

“I told the man at the ticket window that I was accompanied by a distinguished colored educator for whom I should like to secure a Pullman berth if possible. The man at the ticket window told me very frankly that he could not refuse me the sale of a berth for my Negro companion, but that it was customary to put colored passengers demanding reservations in the drawing room, and that no drawing room was available on this occasion; if I insisted upon buying a berth he hoped that I would persuade the colored man to remain in the day coach until the white passengers retired, to avoid any possible objection upon the part of any Negrophobe who might be in the sleeper.

“I purchased the railroad ticket and Pullman reservation for Dr. Moore. When I presented him with the tickets he seemed a bit puzzled at the red ticket for the Pullman berth. He studied it for a moment and then handed it back to me. ‘This is a Pullman ticket,’ he said, ‘I can’t possibly use this.’

"I explained to him that it was his legal right and that in the absence of separate Pullman accomodations for colored, the carrier was required by law to provide identical accommodations.

" 'I understand that,' Dr. Moore replied, 'but I have made it a rule of my life never to permit myself to do anything that would be offensive to a white person. I shall be happier in the day coach.' I could not persuade him to use the sleeper."

Peter Weddick Moore rose from slavery to a position as educator and statesman, and dedicated his life to the service of both races of his state. To the white people who knew him best he still lives as an apostle of interracial good will; to hundreds of his own race, whom he knew as neighbors and friends, he still lives as a leader and counsellor; to the thousands of students with whom he had daily association, he still lives through the recollection of his characteristic phrase, "Be somebody."

Ezekiel Ezra Smith

*and the*

*Fayetteville State Normal  
School*



COMMITTEE TO PREPARE A BRIEF SKETCH OF  
THE LIFE OF  
EZEKIEL EZRA SMITH

Duke University  
Durham, N. C.

DR. EDGAR T. THOMPSON, FACULTY ADVISER

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MISS ANNA BOYD

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Fayetteville State Normal School  
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DEAN J. B. MACRAE, FACULTY ADVISER

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MISS MARY MCRAE

MISS DOROTHEA DAFFORD

MISS MAMIE MORRIS

MR. ROBERT WATSON



*Ezekiel Ezra Smith*



SOME OF THE GREATEST teachers known to history were born as slaves or as the sons of enslaved families. In ancient Greece it was common for the leaders of public life to trace their education back to the tutoring received from slaves attached to their fathers' households. Such slaves were well treated, respected, and even venerated, for it was seen that their work lived after them.

So far as known, Ezekiel Ezra Smith, who earned high rank in his home state not only as teacher, but as soldier, preacher, businessman, and diplomat, was never a slave, but his ancestry certainly had, at least in part, a slave background. His nephew, the Reverend A. A. Smith of Goldsboro, North Carolina, is authority for the statement that Ezekiel Ezra Smith's father's parents were slaves, but that his mother's parents were free Negroes.<sup>1</sup> From another source we learn that his father's grandmother was brought as a slave direct from Africa.<sup>2</sup> Smith himself once informed Dean J. W. Seabrook, his successor

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<sup>1</sup> Letter, March 25, 1937.

<sup>2</sup> A. B. Caldwell, *History of the American Negro* (N. C. ed.), Vol. IV (1921).

as president of the Fayetteville State Normal School, that he had never been a slave; so that altogether the available evidence is that Smith's parents, Alexander and Catherine Smith, were both free Negroes.

Free Negroes living prior to the Civil War enjoyed special advantages, but they also suffered from special difficulties, and it was in a not very prosperous home in Duplin County, North Carolina, that "Zeke" Smith was born on May 23, 1852.

During Zeke Smith's childhood no schools for Negro children existed in North Carolina; in fact, the instruction of Negroes was specifically forbidden by the state laws. Hence whatever education he obtained was procured through the natural agencies of play and work. His chief playmates were the white children on the plantation where he lived. Through his association with them, through their games and talk, he gained at second-hand a little of that knowledge which they brought with them from their school; and the little glimpse of a wider world which he thus obtained filled him with a thirst for a greater knowledge, for his was an absorptive mind, eager to inquire and expand.

Thus even in his childhood Zeke won friends among the white people around him. This early association laid the foundation for his later popularity and friendship with them, which was an advantage to him during the whole of his subsequent life. Somehow during this period Zeke strengthened those other traits characteristic of him which afterward caused the Honorable John H. Cook, long a leader at the Fayetteville bar, to remark, "It was a pleasure to be associated with him"; he learned the little courtesies of life that in mature years caused him to be called a veritable Chesterfield; he learned poise, self-re-

straint, dignity, and an infinite patience; he learned to accept a back seat until he was ready to occupy a front one; and he learned how to avoid making needless enemies.

In the acquisition of these qualities his mother was no doubt a major influence, for Smith was more than once heard to remark that to his mother he owed more than he could say. In the history of his career she is a shadowy figure, but it can be surmised she was one of that great group of Negro mothers who, weak themselves by reason of their race and sex, are content to be strong through their sons.

## I

BEFORE ZEKE HAD reached his teens the Civil War came and passed, and at last the frontiers of knowledge, hitherto inaccessible to Negro lads, no matter how ambitious, were open to all who could reach them. This phase of his life is obscure, but soon after the war his parents must have moved to the neighborhood of Wilmington, North Carolina, for he afterwards said that he was forced to walk three miles each day from the outskirts of the town to his school.

Although the schools were now open to all races and creeds, the educational facilities for Negro boys and girls were as yet meagre. After the war, we are told, "the colored people had no school buildings save the com-

paratively few which had been built by the Freedmen's Bureau, northern benevolence, or their own personal contributions of labor, materials, and money."<sup>3</sup>

Textbooks ranged from "Grier's Almanac to Parker & Watson's Reader," while even in the white schools there were frequently no books for the children beyond Webster's Blue-Back Spelling Book, the Bible, or, as one rural teacher expressed it, "anything we could get." Even a decade after the war, illiteracy shadowed more than a third of the people of the state, while poverty and prostration were so universal that even the more fortunate families met the low tuition fees with difficulty.

Wilmington, however, was fortunate in having an educational movement that arose almost as soon as the smoke of war had cleared, and it was, moreover, a relatively prosperous town, due to its situation as a port and as a centre of the turpentine trade. Here Zeke got his first regular job making barrel staves in a turpentine plant. His pay was twenty-five cents a day. If this seems low it must be remembered that mature laborers seldom got more than fifty cents a day, while farm hands earned much less. In the course of time Zeke was awarded a raise in pay and by diligent saving he was able to raise the small sum required to enter Shaw Collegiate Institute at Raleigh, later known as Shaw University. He had at first dreamed of going to Hampton Institute in Virginia, which he admired because of its emphasis on industrial education and his regard for Samuel Chapman Armstrong, its founder, but Hampton was too overcrowded to admit him.

At Shaw he found the encouragement and material

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<sup>3</sup> M. C. S. Noble, *A History of the Public Schools of North Carolina* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1930), p. 325.

assistance he needed, and he was glad to enroll as a work student. He taught classes during the winter months and served as a teacher during the summer months at a subscription school, presiding over students from "6 to 60," as he told his friend, J. G. Smith. In the hours not devoted to study he helped to make and carry bricks.

One of Ezekiel Ezra Smith's most salient traits was his intense sense of personal dignity, and it is told of him that whenever he passed by with a barrow full of bricks he used to avoid the women students. But his shame was due to his ragged clothes and not to his labor.

At Shaw Institute it was the custom for students, when paying their bills, to walk onto the platform during the chapel period and hand the sum to the president. Dr. Smith more than once told his successor, Dean Seabrook, of the many times he did this, walking up the aisle with his hands folded behind his back to hide the shabby condition of his trousers. It was one of Ezekiel Ezra Smith's traits that he liked to be well and appear well, both inwardly and outwardly, and face the world with serenity, whatever his misfortunes or doubts.

## II

IN 1875, WHILE still a student, young Smith married a fellow student, Willie A. Burnett, daughter of John and Polly Burnett. Their union lasted thirty-two years until her death in 1907. They had one child, a boy, now



dead, who became a physician at Newport News, Virginia.

Smith completed his formal education in 1878, receiving an A.B. degree. At the graduation exercises he delivered an oration on the African republic of Liberia. One of his auditors was President J. C. Price of Livingstone College. Mr. Price was so impressed by oration and orator that he remembered both for many years. The consequence will be later disclosed.

After his graduation Smith went to live at Mount Olive, North Carolina, where he received notification that he had been elected principal of a school at Goldsboro. He took charge in the fall of 1878. An associate there was the brilliant E. A. Alderman, who subsequently became one of the foremost educators of the state and of the South as well, and was afterwards, in turn, president of the University of North Carolina, of Tulane University at New Orleans, and of the University of Virginia.

Even at this early age young Smith was concerned with religious as well as educational advancement. He had been converted when he was eighteen years old, and a year after moving to Goldsboro he felt called to preach. He was ordained by the Baptist State Convention of which he subsequently became president, remaining in that office until 1883. His longest pastorate was in the First Baptist Church of Fayetteville, where he served six years. He was a member of the Lott Carey Foreign Mission Convention and was moderator of the Union Association, these offices proving that despite his numerous secular activities he remained fundamentally a religious man.

With his energy and imaginative gifts, Smith was al-

ways strongly attracted by military life and in 1880 he took a marked interest in the organization of the fourth battalion of the North Carolina Guard and in the same year he was appointed a major. This led to other military activities, as will be seen later.

Meantime he made such a good record at the Goldsboro school that when a successor was wanted for Charles W. Chesnutt, the famous Negro author, as head of the Fayetteville State Normal School, Smith was immediately chosen and he took charge there as principal in 1883, thus beginning a service that lasted for virtually a half century.

The school had been established in 1877 as the first of its kind in the state. Its original home was on a lot on Gillespie Street donated by General O. O. Howard of the Freedmen's Bureau. At this time the school was housed in a small, two-story wooden building. The three rooms of the upper story were used by the normal classes. The lower floor was reserved for the primary grades. In these unpromising surroundings Principal Smith labored for five years until he was suddenly moved into a new and strange field.

### III

IN 1888 GROVER CLEVELAND, president of the United States, was seeking a diplomat qualified to occupy the post of Minister Resident and Consul General of the

United States to Liberia. President Cleveland, being the titular head of the Democratic party, naturally preferred to appoint a Democrat. He also naturally preferred a man who should be highly recommended. He found the necessary qualifications in Ezekiel Ezra Smith, for Smith was not only a Democrat in a day when members of his race were mostly Republican, but he was strongly recommended by various prominent men, including President Price of Livingstone College, who, as has been noted, was so deeply impressed by Smith's graduating oration on this very subject of Liberia.

President Cleveland appointed Smith to Liberia in a letter dated April 24, 1888, in which he said that he reposed special trust and confidence in his "integrity, prudence, and ability." Smith at once resigned his position at Fayetteville and with his wife sailed for Liberia by way of Europe, carrying a special passport which enabled him to make several interesting stops in Europe and Africa.

Smith looked forward to his duties in the African republic with the keenest interest, being but little aware of the special difficulties he was to encounter there. What he found in Monrovia, capital of Liberia, must have startled him, for, although the town had many fine buildings and homes built by the free American Negroes who had colonized it, Monrovia and its neighboring settlements were but little more than fringes of territory wrested from a jungle inhabited by native tribes living a primitive life and bartering their own products with each other, using brass kettles, kegs of gunpowder, and tobacco for money.

There were other things to startle him, for, although

Liberia was the centre of a region teeming with all kinds of useful products, he found that the urban inhabitants were doing little or nothing to cultivate the soil or to develop the rich resources around them, but were importing most of their food, clothing, and other supplies from America and England; and Liberia College, their one major educational institution, instead of teaching the Liberians improved methods of agriculture and other useful techniques, offered courses in classic languages and literature and other subjects derived from an eighteenth- rather than a nineteenth-century culture. The officials of the Republic, modeled closely after the government of the United States, liked to dress in long-tailed coats and high silk hats, and their sons were sometimes carried to school on the backs of natives lest their aristocratic feet touch the ground. In fact there was nowhere any sign of a desire for contact with the African soil or African conditions.

All this could have made no favorable impression on Smith, who was a practical man and loved to deal with concrete things. Nevertheless, he set himself to learn about the country and its people. He soon found that it had many charms and attractions not visible at first glance, and for many years afterward he liked to tell about the beauties and riches of this African land. His diplomatic progress was, however, at first slow.

The president of Liberia at the time was Hilary Richard Wright Johnson, who had been a professor in Liberia College and then the Liberian secretary of state. He was the first president who was able to claim Liberia as his birthplace. Johnson was in many respects an able and progressive man, but he was surrounded by officials who

were less so, and some of these officials, who were of West Indian descent or strongly under European influence, were not always hospitable to fresh arrivals from the United States. In fact, Charles Taylor of Richmond, Virginia, who had been Smith's predecessor, had not been able to like either the Liberian government or Liberian life and had, a few months after landing in Africa, begged F. F. Bayard, Cleveland's secretary of state, to permit him to return. His request had been granted, leaving behind the duties which Smith was now asked to fulfill.

The party in power in Liberia at the time was not favorable to closer contact with the United States and did nothing to make Smith's first few days enjoyable. In fact, the Liberian secretary of state allowed Smith to wait eleven days before giving him an audience and permitting him to present his credentials.

Although Ezekiel Ezra Smith had schooled himself in patience and tact, he was by nature of a peppery temper and it would have been easy for him to see in this inhospitable reception an affront to himself and to his country. However, if he felt put out, he made no outward sign, but "waited patiently," as he afterward wrote to the American secretary of state, "without the slightest murmur."

Those who knew Smith did not doubt his ability to keep his serenity under all circumstances. An interesting story is told about him by President J. W. Seabrook. A friend said to a state senator one day, "Mr. Senator, you are the second best diplomat in Fayetteville."

"Thank you, who is the first?"

"Dr. Smith," was the reply.

## IV

ON A CERTAIN occasion in Liberia he was forced to deal with an embarrassing circumstance. An important celebration was planned for the forty-first anniversary of the Republic and Smith attended the exercises. The orator of the occasion spoke in an uncomplimentary fashion of the Negroes of the United States. Again Smith might have become angry, but instead he passed over the incident as if it had not occurred. He understood that if he were going to improve relations between his own country and the African republic he must be as friendly as possible with the Liberian government and people, and gradually educate them to an understanding of America's disinterested attitude.

Although he was willing to go out of his way to please the Liberians, he would not give up any of his own principles. The Episcopal Church was the fashionable church in the Republic and the one that the diplomats always attended. But Smith was a Baptist and, though it was unfashionable and against precedent, he attended his own little Baptist Church.<sup>4</sup> His policy in all situations was stated in his own words: "I shall studiously and earnestly labor to merit only the good will of all; to perpetuate the amicable relationship between the two

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<sup>4</sup>Letter to Bayard, private, August 10, 1888.

countries, and above all it shall be my constant endeavor to worthily represent the great government of which I am a member and which has honored me as its representative.”<sup>5</sup>

At the end of five months he had acquainted himself with the conditions of the people by meeting and knowing the president, cabinet members, judges, legislators, ministers, college professors, merchants, and traders. He was soon able to send home very favorable reports and he urged other Negroes to come to Liberia. He was pleased with the beautiful as well as the practical aspects of Liberia and he wrote, “If a thing of beauty is a joy forever, certainly one’s joy be endless when once he beholds the beautiful coffee farms along the St. Paul’s River.”<sup>6</sup>

For two years Dr. Smith labored as minister to Liberia, improving the friendship between Liberia and the United States. He succeeded in carrying out the purpose he had proclaimed at the beginning of his two years.

## V

BUT THE CLIMATE of Liberia was trying on his wife’s health and Dr. Smith’s mind was troubled by the condi-

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<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *African Repository* (American Colonization Society), LXV, 92, letter to American Colonization Society.

tions of his affairs at home. So on January 23, 1890, he addressed the new secretary of state, James G. Blaine, requesting President Harrison's permission for a sixty-day leave of absence to be passed in the United States. The leave was granted him, and Smith and his wife left for home immediately. Their joy was great when they reached their quiet home in Goldsboro.

Four days after his arrival, June 22, 1890, the colored people gave him a reception in Williams Hall. From the description of the event quoted here from the *Goldsboro Argus*, we know that the citizens of Goldsboro, white and black, were proud of their fellow townsman and eager to honor him publicly:

"The reception given Thursday night, June 26, at Williams Hall in this city, by our colored fellow citizens, complimentary to Hon. E. E. Smith, U. S. Minister to Liberia, and family, in honor of their return home on a vacation trip, was as refined, brilliant, and enjoyable as possible. The hall was beautifully decorated and the reception opened with a splendid rendition of 'Welcome Home,' by a complement of male and female voices, with organ accompaniment, as the minister and his family entered the hall. Professors Stevens and Croom and Editor Nixon of the 'Voice' spoke in eloquent terms of welcome, and minister Smith responded with much feeling and deep pathos. Mayor Peterson and the editor of the *Argus* were also present at the reception and spoke to the occasion. It was in every respect a most creditable event. Refreshments of the season were in order and in abundance, too, so that there was a feast for all."

After his leave of absence had expired, Dr. Smith was not asked to return to Liberia. The reason for this was political. He was a staunch Democrat, and the Repub-



lican president, Benjamin Harrison, made a new appointment for the position.

But Smith's splendid work was to obtain recognition in a form he welcomed. The American Colonization Society, with headquarters at Baltimore, appointed him as one of its agents, and he made an extensive tour, lecturing to his race and urging support of the society. Smith had found Liberia in a chaotic state, but he was convinced it had a great future. He felt that Liberia needed a new, stimulating, progressive element. The capable Southern Negroes who had been held back by many handicaps offered promising material. So with interest and vigor he undertook the task of persuading them to settle in this Negro republic.<sup>7</sup>

## VI

LIVING EXPENSES HAD been relatively high in Liberia, but Smith had managed to save enough from his salary of four thousand dollars to buy some land outside of Goldsboro. He had been raised on a farm and had always loved the soil, the smell of fresh air and growing things, and a wide expanse of sky. As soon as his lecture tours were over, he bought a farm of his own where he retired for a rest. Satisfying a lifelong ambition, he bought a

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<sup>7</sup> Letter received from Prof. C. M. Epps, written at request of Mrs J. A. Williams of Raleigh, N. C., March 20, 1937.

string of race horses, for, although a scholar and man of affairs, he never lost his fondness for sports and outdoor activities.

But the world again called him. He was offered a position as principal of the Catholic Hill School, later the Stephens-Lee School, in Asheville, North Carolina, and he accepted it. Here again he was the educator, energetic and progressive. He held this position for only one semester and was then invited back to Goldsboro as principal of the normal school, one of the seven established by the state. After one session at Goldsboro, he was called back to reassume the principalship of the State Normal School at Fayetteville.

As principal of the Fayetteville State Normal School, Dr. Smith was a faithful executive. His integrity and efficiency drew praise from white people and Negroes alike. He worked loyally with the school board and the state officials. He lived within the school budget, and operated without a deficit.

Being a loyal citizen and a religious one, he stressed citizenship and knowledge of the Bible in most of his lectures. He himself was unceasingly athirst for more knowledge. It was his custom continually to ask questions of educational or historical value. Consequently, he knew the history of every famous spot in North Carolina, as well as the name of every county, county seat, and division.

A. B. Caldwell, in his *History of the American Negro*, judges him thus highly: "Dr. Smith was one of the most useful citizens, brilliant teachers, successful diplomats, loyal and gallant soldiers, popular, liberal, and broad-minded Christian gentlemen, successful pastors, and business men that North Carolina has ever produced."

## VII

THE PERIOD OF the Populist regime in North Carolina (1896-1900) came on. The Populists were chiefly dissatisfied farmers who fused with the Republican party and elected Daniel Russell as governor. Dr. Smith remained a Democrat, even in the face of political disfavor. Many Negroes did not like him for this reason, and school attendance began to fall away after 1900. But Dr. Smith continued his quiet labors. The fact that he was a Democrat helped him in at least one respect. The legislature favored him and voted increased appropriations for the school. Even his critics could not hold back for long. They realized his honesty and his true interest in his people, and his tactfulness and diplomacy soon won him many devoted friends.

The year 1898 arrived and the United States declared war on Spain. President McKinley called on North Carolina for three infantry regiments. Governor Russell requested that one regiment be made up of Negroes, since they composed one third of the population in the state. So the first regiment ever organized and entirely commanded by colored men was mustered under the leadership of Colonel James Young. Dr. Smith obtained leave of absence from the school and enlisted eagerly. On April 23, 1898, he was appointed adjutant of the Military and Historical Portrait Group of the Third

North Carolina Infantry. In a few months he was promoted to regimental adjutant. At Fort Macon, North Carolina, the regiment got its first lessons. In preparation for Cuban service it was sent to Camp Poland, Tennessee, for advanced training. Here Dr. Smith was injured when he was thrown from his horse. In spite of a fractured leg, he continued to serve his regiment from June 6, 1898, to February 8, 1899. The protocol of peace was signed, ending the Spanish-American War before this Negro battalion could leave the camp at Knoxville. The men had been eager to serve their country, and it is said they wept like babes because they did not get the opportunity to prove it.

Education was henceforth the chief interest of Dr. Smith's life. His first aim was the progress of his race. He liked to say that some of the world's finest specimens of manhood had sprung from the colored race, and that to be a Negro was something to be proud of. Hanging on the wall of the school at Fayetteville was a picture of Frederick Douglass, the Negro leader, whom Dr. Smith revered. Not less was his admiration for Booker T. Washington; his principles were law for Dr. Smith on many occasions. Especially did he support Washington's emphasis on the value of industrial education. He believed that such education was of primary importance to the advancement of the Negro in the South, where the colored man received low wages because he was unskilled and he was unskilled because he was poor.

To remedy this situation the Industrial Building on the present campus site was built in 1924 by Dr. Smith mainly by use of a state appropriation, but partly out of collections from local citizens. The following quotation from a speech by N. C. Blanchard, which Dr. Smith

found worthy of putting in the State Normal School catalogue, best defines his own ideals: "To close the door of hope against any child within the borders of the State, whatever be his race, or condition, by deliberately removing him from the possibility of securing such training as will fit him for the life he has to live, is un-Christian, un-Democratic, and un-American."

Dr. Smith wanted both students and school to grow in character. Many of his talks to the students during chapel exercises centered around religion. It was said of him that he could preach a better sermon than most active pastors. To emphasize his hopes he used to say: "We need larger facilities and we are hopeful, for, indeed, we can exclaim, 'Hitherto hath the Lord helped us,' as have our good friends also. We verily believe that God and our State will help those who help themselves, hence our efforts."

Under his administration the Fayetteville State Normal School made history in the educational life of the state. The school was moved several times before a suitable site was found. In 1902 it was moved from Gillespie Street to Ashley Heights, a place a mile west of its first home. After spending four years on the Heights, it was moved back into Fayetteville and remained for two years in a rented hall on Worth Street. Smith perceived great possibilities for the school. He knew the slow pace of education among his people in the South, and was thoroughly aware of the pressing need of educational expansion for the Negroes of North Carolina. To bring the normal school up to a modern plane, he decided to take upon himself the task of building it up and leave the rest to his God. In 1907 fifty acres of valuable land lying just outside the western limits of the city were purchased

as a permanent home for the school. The first of the buildings which now dot the campus was erected and occupied in September, 1908.

In order to pay for the land on which the normal school is now situated, several colored men endorsed a note for three thousand dollars. Besides Dr. Smith, the endorsers were F. D. Williston, E. N. Williams, J. G. Smith, and Dr. P. N. Melchor. The note was renewed several times; each time some person would withdraw, until the final payment was made by Dr. Smith alone, who later deeded the land to the state.

Generosity was a salient trait of the man. He lent sums to many applicants, white or colored, and said nothing when they were not returned. Diplomacy and patience with human nature were among his best qualities.

He was an unvarying advocate of harmony between the races. On several occasions he was called upon to quell disturbances. Soon after the school was moved to its present site, a Negro, Tom Walker, killed two policemen and wounded another when the officers attempted to search his home for liquor. Walker fled. A mob gathered near the courthouse, with the intention of raiding and burning several houses belonging to colored people because it was thought Walker might be hiding in one of them. Dr. J. Vance McGougan, a citizen of Fayetteville, telephoned to Dr. Smith, "Come down here and help us." Dr. Smith hurried down to the business district, mounted a barrel in the midst of the mob, and delivered a most appealing address. He told the mob that the colored people did not approve of what Walker had done, and that he had fifty or more colored men who were ready and willing to help hunt for the offender

and bring him to justice. The mob dispersed, and Walker was soon captured, legally tried, and punished.

In 1908 another Negro, Sam Murchison, killed Chief of Police Benton of Fayetteville. The officer had been investigating the cause of a woman's scream, which he heard coming from Murchison's house. The murderer ran, but Sheriff Watson caught him and placed him in a patrol wagon. A mob gathered with the intention of lynching him. Sheriff Watson spurred the horses on. He reached the jail safely. The mob followed to the jail, threatening to take Murchison from the sheriff. Smith found it necessary to intervene. He telephoned Sheriff Watson and offered to bring men to defend the prisoner if necessary. However, the mob dispersed in the face of the sheriff's firmness.

At this period an active interracial committee was working in Fayetteville. Between 1907 and 1908 Dr. Smith was president. Other members were H. L. Cook, Captain J. D. McNeill, H. W. Lilly, E. R. McKeithan, all white; E. N. Williams, Dr. P. N. Melchor, J. G. Smith, and T. H. McNeill, all colored.

## VIII

IN EVERY SITUATION Dr. Smith preferred diplomacy to force. His courteous manner was influenced by his wide experiences in Africa, in the South, and in the North.

As a student he had been nicknamed "Lord Chesterfield." He was careful in the smallest things. Whenever he appeared before the public he was immaculately groomed. He required his students to be neat. Every morning he inspected the young men of the normal school as they marched erectly before him, not hesitating to send them back to the dormitory to shine their shoes or comb their hair.

He had a most effective way of illustrating a lesson. He often resorted to anecdotes to emphasize a point. On one occasion he told a story of warning against "laying down on the job." A boy had volunteered and had been enlisted in the army. During the battle an officer saw the boy lying on the ground, trying to hide. The officer said, "Get up from there! Don't be a baby." The youth replied, "I wish I was a baby, and a gal baby at that."

President Smith insisted that his students meet certain requirements regarding their mental, moral, and physical welfare. His standards are indicated by this statement found in the 1894-95 catalogue:

"It may also be suggested, in all kindness, that none be recommended who are not physically, mentally, and morally fitted for the teaching profession. The fact that a candidate has failed at an examination is alone hardly evidence that he should come to the Normal School. While it is our aim, by faithful effort, to fit our students for the work of teaching, even here we cannot work miracles."

Smith doubtless made this last statement after a number of students who had failed to pass the county teachers' examination sought admission to the Fayetteville Normal School. These students must have had poor



elementary training, because the county examinations of that period would hardly compare favorably with the sixth-grade standards of today.

Each normal school applicant was judged according to these criteria:

1. Good health, good common sense and sound judgment.
2. A thorough knowledge of the branches he proposes to teach.
3. Aptness to teach. A teacher may be rich in knowledge, but it will be of little value to his pupils unless he has the skill of communicating it to them.
4. Perfect self-control. He cannot govern others when unable to govern himself.
5. Love for his calling. Any work is easily done when prompted by love. Whatever one does willingly is no trouble.<sup>8</sup>

These principles Dr. Smith never relaxed. As it was his custom to punish pupils who misbehaved, he found that in many cases he was confronted with the problem of dealing with the parents. On one occasion a mother came to the school in an angry mood. After great difficulty she was directed to his office. She stamped in without knocking. Dr. Smith addressed her in his most polite manner. In the interview he completely won her respect. Before departing she remarked that if pupils at the school were taught such manners as the president had exhibited, she would send all her children to the state normal.

Dr. Smith knew how to be both dignified and demo-

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<sup>8</sup> Catalogue, 1889-90.

cratic. He was fond both of working and playing with the students. He was an ardent admirer of athletics. Baseball was a favorite sport. He sometimes told a player he would give him five dollars if he hit a home run. He once told a coach that he would raise his salary if he would win a game for him. Under his stimulation the Fayetteville Normal produced some of the best Negro baseball teams in the state. Among other sports he enjoyed horseback riding, foot racing, and boxing. Often in company with some of his good friends he took long walks or rides. Whatever he did, he did with enthusiasm.

Under Smith's administration Fayetteville State Normal School, oldest institution of its kind in America, grew from three rooms in a small frame structure to a plant of ten buildings, standing on a fifty-acre tract of land. To its expansion he gave liberally of his private funds. He helped plan the construction of Aycock Building, conspicuous on the campus. Another long-sought structure, equipped with an assembly hall, offices, music rooms, classrooms, and laboratories, was named the Smith Administration Building in honor of the revered president. Long before any money was appropriated or plans drawn up, he would point out specific sites where buildings could be erected. Some of these he lived to see. Others were erected after he died.

In 1908 Dr. Smith married Nannie Louise Goode of Vance County. Educated at Bennett College in Greensboro, North Carolina, Mrs. Smith revealed herself as a good executive and disciplinarian, who shouldered much of her husband's varied responsibilities.

In addition to his interests in specific educational and religious fields, President Smith served well in secular

activities. In 1906 he became president of the State Teachers' Association of North Carolina. In 1902 he was editor of the *Baptist Sentinel* and secretary of the North Carolina State Baptist Convention. He wrote for two newspapers. He organized the first North Carolina newspaper for Negroes, the *Carolina Enterprise*, in Goldsboro, which proved to be a successful weekly, and he served as editor of the *Banner Enterprise* in Raleigh. At different times he was president of the Farmers' and Mechanics' Building and Loan Association in Fayetteville and director of the Sun Mutual Life Insurance Company. He liked to see his people save as well as work.

## IX

WHEN DR. SEABROOK, the present president of Fayetteville State Normal School, came to the institution in 1922, Dr. Smith, then seventy years old, was disturbed. He loved activity and feared that the State Board of Education might be considering him too old to carry on the work of the institution which was now progressing rapidly. He made a special trip to Raleigh to see the members of the Board of Education. They assured him his fears were groundless, as they were sending Dr. Seabrook to the school, not to replace him, but to aid him, because the school was growing fast and needed a larger

staff. Dr. Smith was satisfied. He was determined not to step aside, and kept his post for ten years longer. In later years Dr. Smith often thanked his assistant. The association between the two became so close that he often asked Dr. Seabrook's advice in many matters and referred to him as a son.

On May 24-25, 1927, Dr. Smith received a crowning honor when the semicentennial celebration was held. Addresses were made by many notables, including State Superintendent A. T. Allen, Captain Nathan O'Berry of Goldsboro, General A. J. Bowley, N. C. Newbold, James Y. Joyner, G. K. Grantham, H. L. Cook, and C. C. Chadbourn. The presidents of virtually all of the North Carolina institutions devoted to the higher education of Negroes came in person to praise Dr. Smith's achievements. Features of the celebration were the presence of the United States Military Band from Fort Bragg, the presentation of a panorama of the growth of the institution in the form of a mural decoration painted by a student, and the unveiling in the auditorium of a life-sized oil painting of President Smith.

Five more years of active work ensued before his health began to fail. He had been suffering from asthma for many years and as he grew older the condition seemed to get worse. On December 6, 1932, he died at the age of eighty.

The funeral service was held in the Smith Auditorium. It was one of the largest and most impressive that either race in Fayetteville had ever witnessed. The burial was in Brookside Cemetery. Telephone operators remarked that at Dr. Smith's death more messages were received from state officials, congressmen, educators, preachers, and friends from many states than even at the death of

white celebrities. White and colored people came in numbers. The crowd became so great that it was necessary to place loud-speakers on the campus so that those who were unable to get into the auditorium might hear the funeral service at the Brookside Cemetery.

In May, 1937, the school was authorized to extend the course of study to four years, to grant bachelors' degrees, and to give qualified students grade A teachers' certificates—proof of the efficiency of the school for which Dr. Smith had labored so long.

On Sunday, April 10, 1938, a monument erected to his memory by white and colored admirers was unveiled on the campus—proof of the respect in which his town and his state had held him.

By his old students President Smith will be long remembered, for he was able to make lasting impressions both through example and precept. They will remember his rectitude in demeanor and dress. They will also remember his pride in the name of Negro—a pride of race and not a racial pride, for he was anxious for the Negro "to climb, not to be lifted." It was his boast that never had a graduate of the Fayetteville Normal been in the criminal courts. "Have something" and "be something"—these were among his favorite sayings. Indeed, the recollection of these things may last longer than the numerous monuments by which his name has been honored











